DAISY ASHFORD

HER BOOK

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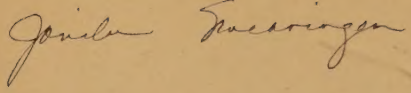
Ethel C. Taylor



Jonika Swearingen

DAISY ASHFORD: HER BOOK

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A COLLECTION OF THE REMAINING NOVELS
BY THE AUTHOR OF
"THE YOUNG VISITERS,"
TOGETHER WITH "THE JEALOUS GOVERNES"
BY ANGELA ASHFORD

WITH A PREFACE BY
IRVIN S. COBB

NEW YORK
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PREFACE

By Irvin S. Cobb

The rôle of discoverer is pleasing, nearly always, and more especially in its reactions is it pleasing. The actual performance of discovery may be fraught with hardships and with inconveniences and even with perils; as witness Christopher Columbus making his first voyage over this way in a walloping window-blind of a tub of a ship and his last one back with chains at his wrists and ankles; as witness Hendrick Hudson; as witness Dr. Harvey's unfortunate position in the eye of constituted authority after he had discovered the circulation of the blood; as witness the lamentable consequences to whoever it was who, probably by the process of eating a mess of miscellaneous wild fungoids, disclosed to a bereaved family and a benefited world the important fact that certain mushrooms were nourishing and certain toadstools were fatal.

To your true discoverer the compensations of his trade come when he points with pride to the continent or the great natural fact or the new author he discovered and cries aloud before all creation: "See what I have found!"

So, aside from the compliment and the honor of it, I feel added gratification and added pleasure that I should be invited to write a foreword for the first American edition of Miss Daisy Ashford's second book. You see, I claim the distinction of having been the first person in America other than its publisher and my friend Mr. George H. Doran to read the manuscript of that immortal work "The Young Visiters." If I did not actually discover Miss Ashford, at the age of nine when she wrote "The Young Visiters"—for indeed no one appears to have discovered her then excepting perhaps her parents—at least I had a hand in discovering her on this side of the Atlantic ocean at a time when mention of her name, which now is so famous a name, meant nothing to the casual hearer.

After the lapse of nearly a year the event stands in my memory as marking one of those hours of pure and perfect joy which come but

too rarely to human beings. At the request of Mr. Doran I read the manuscript which he had just brought with him from Europe. I read the story itself first and afterwards the preface, or foreword. This, I think, was as it should be. By rights a preface however sprightly and well done—and a preface by Sir James Barrie would have to be well done—should be served with a book as cheese is served with a dinner: at its finish and not at the beginning.

When I had read the story through to the last delicious sentence of the last delectable paragraph and when I had caught up with my breath which I had lost by laughing or rather when my breath had caught up with me, I sapiently said to him:

"Publish it? Of course you ought to publish it. Aside from such sordid considerations as the profits which are certain to accrue you owe it to yourself as a responsible member of the human race to give this glorious thing circulation among the reading public of North America. If I were you I'd print thirty thousand copies in the first batch before I released any copies among the reviewers or sent any copies as samples to the trade. And after

that I'd keep the presses running steadily in the hope of being able to keep up with the demand which is sure to follow on the heels of publication. This is almost the funniest book that was ever written and it is all the funnier because the writer was so desperately in earnest, so tremendously serious all the while she was writing it."

"It has made a big hit in England already," he said. "But over there some people are saying that the author must have been a grown-up person—that no child of nine could have written such a thing. The suggestion is even being advanced that Barrie himself wrote it. I know better, because I have seen the original script in a child's handwriting on old and faded paper, and I met Miss Ashford some weeks ago in London and I have had all the proof one needs that this is the authentic product of a nine-year-old mind."

To which I said:

"No doubt some people will be saying the same thing over here and they'll be wrong just as these English skeptics are and if they'll only stop to think for a moment they'll know why they're wrong. No grown person, not even the creator of a Wendy and a Peter Pan,

could have done this thing. It exhales the perfume of an authoritative genuineness in every line of it. It had to be a child who wrote it—a child with a child's imagination and a child's viewpoint and a child's ignorance of the things she wrote about. In a way of speaking it is like those unintentionally humorous obituary poems which appear in the papers. No professional humorist can hope to equal them because when he writes one he does it with deliberate intent to be funny and invariably he betrays his hand. It is when some poor mourning amateur dips a 'prentice pen in the very blood of his or her heart and writes such a poem that it becomes so pathetically and so tragically side-splitting."

This was what I said. Not in these words exactly, but to this effect.

Mind you, I am not proclaiming that I am the only person who has said this. Between chuckles thousands and thousands of others since that day have thought and have said it. What I am proud of is that I was the first person in America to say it, and so to this extent I count myself a discoverer and I feel a sort of proprietary sense in being permitted here to introduce "Daisy Ashford: Her Book." I

am mindful of the distinction because of the reason I have just stated and because also in a way of speaking it qualifies me for some sort of literary kinship with Sir James M. Barrie.

Even so I do not aspire to the presumptuous hope that any one may say "Well, I see this man Cobb is doing for Miss Ashford's second book what Barrie did for her first one." I have no such ambition. A minnow always errs when he undertakes to swim in the company of a whale. If he tries to swim alongside he is unnoticed; if he swims in the wake he is swamped. He makes other minnows jealous or contemptuous as the case may be, and he is properly ignored by the whale.

Miss Ashford's own preface, accompanying this volume, gives the chronological sequences of its contents. The first story of all, "A Short Story of Love and Marriage," she wrote when she was eight years old. "The True History of Leslie Woodcock" was written three years later, after "The Young Visiters" had been written. "Where Love Lies Deepest" trickled from the busy pen of the young person when she was twelve years old; and "The Hangman's Daughter," the most pretentious of them all and to my way of think-

ing the best of her preserved works next only to "The Young Visiters," was undertaken when she was about thirteen, she says, and finished in the following year. Also included in this book is a story by Miss Ashford's sister Angela, done at the age of eight and entitled "The Jealous Governes; *or* The Granted Wish." In this we learn the real facts regarding the coming of babies. Babies are not fetched by storks. Medical men bring them in boxes and afterward render bills for the same, as note the following: (page 330) "Miss Junick Dr. to doctor Paulin for one baby delivered as per agreement £1," a low enough price truly. If a child of eight (who in point of years is so very much closer to being a baby than most of the writers on the subject are) cannot be trusted to recall the circumstances of this mystery, who can? We can only regret that a second sister, Vera, the artist of this talented nursery, did not save her one contribution to the literary output of the Ashford family. It was entitled "Little Mary and The Angle." *Angle* did not refer to a worm but to a visitor from a celestial domain; we have the word of Miss Daisy Ashford for it that this story was of a pious character. What a

wonderful household the Ashford household must have been with Daisy and Angela writing romances and Vera illustrating them and between times doing a bit of writing herself. Can't you see the pencils flying? Can't you see three little pink tongues sticking out from between three pairs of purposeful lips and wriggling in time to the pencils? Can't you see the small brows furrowed with thought? And the proud parents? And the startled nursemaid?

To my mind the very finest thing about Miss Daisy Ashford's present book is the opportunity it gives us, reading it, to follow the growth of her genius for observation. For surely the faculty to observe and, having observed, to set down in words the results of that observation is a genius. It is more than that, it is two phases of genius harmoniously coupled.

At the age of eight, as we shall note, she begins her career as a writer by knowing very little of certain phases of life largely dealt with by older writers; and this little she knows by reason of what she has read or by reason of what she has heard read. Rapidly, though, she progresses to the point where,

along with these borrowed second-hand impressions, she incorporates impressions which are all her own. Reading what she wrote in the first year of her authorship, we can figure, approximately, when she learned her first French word; when to her there came those vague appreciations of the Roman Catholic faith which are so fascinating to the children of non-Catholics—or perhaps the Ashford family were Romanists. Influenced by these alluring ecclesiastical mysteries, we find her causing a prospective bridegroom to address the Rev. Father Fanty as "your kindness" and begging the reverend gentleman "to excuse my craving for matrimony." Through these pages one sees how travel broadened the young person's fund of experience, which in her favored case meant her fund of material, for unlike many writers, old enough to know better, little Miss Ashford was, by the virtue of a miraculous intuition, inspired to write, sometimes at least, of things that she actually knew about, rather than to deal exclusively with topics which other writers before her had professed to know about. Early in her opening story she speaks of "Cracknels." Reading this word, my memory ran back to

my own childhood when we knew but three standard varieties of crackers—soda-crackers, animal crackers and cracknels which last were round, slickish objects rather like glazed oak-galls, somewhat dusty to the taste and warranted to create a tremendous thirst for licorice water and lemonade. I had entirely forgotten cracknels until Miss Ashford came along yesterday and reminded me of them.

In "A Short History of Love and Marriage" —and how woefully short sometimes is the history of a love and how short too, perhaps, the history of a marriage!—she shows to us that for all its admitted shortness the narrative is properly rounded out. For on page 24 we learn that the happy couple went on a bridal tour to India and "seven hours after they got there had two twin babies." Seven hours and two twin babies, a magnificent showing surely and the prevalent rage for shortness maintained to the very end! Page 24 is one of the very best pages in this book, containing, as it also does, a painstaking description of perhaps the most striking and interesting marriage-morn costume worn by any bridegroom in the Christian era.

It is not my intention to quote overliberally from the contents of this volume. To my way of thinking the trick of inserting copious extracts from a novel into the foreword of that novel is as great a mistake as though I invited you to my house for dinner and before dinner gave you tidbits and choice bites from each course. I should merely be dulling your appetite, without satisfying your hunger.

My aim is to direct your attention, if I may make so bold, to certain pages, specifying them by their numbers and trusting that when you have progressed so far you will, in the reading of them, find the same joy and the same zest that I have found there. For example, on page 46 I respectfully invite your consideration to the pains taken in enumerating the various articles of one Sylvia's running-away or elopement trousseau. There was a thorough young woman for you, and a provident.

On page 87 occurs mention of two sisters and here, despite my promise of two paragraphs ago, I cannot resist the temptation to quote one short but tremendously illuminating line. The author is speaking now of two sis-

ters and of the elder she says, she "was by no means beautiful but she was intensely good." How often it happens that those who are by no means beautiful are intensely good—how often and sometimes oh, how easy for them to be so good. But most of us, even those who educate our faculties of observation the better to earn a living thereby, are very much older than eleven years before we discern this great truth.

I think the brightest gems of all this collection are to be found, in the greatest profusion, in "The Hangman's Daughter." The ill-fated gentleman hangman, Mr. Winston, who moved to Kenelham "where only about two people were hung a year" is in my opinion worthy to be rated with the deathless and ever-to-be glorious Mr. Salteena. Miss Ashford says she was shocked when her brothers on hearing the trial scene read (pages 150, 151, 152) laughed at what she had conceived to be a tragic and dramatic passage in the action of her tale. Later, no doubt, she has come to realize how dangerous a thing it is for one to acquire, either intentfully or otherwise, the reputation of being a humorist; for when he who has been branded as a humorist says a

thing with desire to be serious his friends laugh at it as a most rare whimsicality and when, on the other hand, he deliberately sets out to be humorous, his enemies very likely will declare that never before in all his life was he quite so serious. And had her brothers been older, had they been of an age to appreciate the unconscious comedy that marked the Dreyfus trial, say, or had they ever had opportunity to hear the proceedings in sundry murder trials in America, when learned counsel was asking questions and learned alienists were making answers, they would have been able to appreciate the fact that no burlesque description of a murder trial can ever be quite so utterly comic as a real murder trial sometimes is.

A flashing jewel of dramatic intensity awaits you (pages 229 to 234 inclusive) when you come to read of the rescue of Gladys and Helen from the grasp of the murderer of Helen's own dear father and of the method employed by Gladys' heroic brother for detaining the miscreant Likewise, I pray you, reader dear, that you linger on page 257 wherein the "menu of the table d'hote" which was "of nightly recurrence" at Lord Beau-

fort's castle, is printed in full. In my mind's eye I see little Miss Daisy Ashford, twelve years old going on thirteen, carefully bearing away with her the card of the first meal she ever ate in a regular restaurant and taking it home and treasuring it up against the time when she might insert it into her greatest story, then in process of incubation, at exactly the appointed spot to create the most telling effect, under the most appropriate possible circumstances. Could a proper respect and a proper instinct for local color rise to greater heights? I deny it. So too will you deny it when you arrive at page 258 and read the words emphasized by being displayed in capitals that are on that page at the end of the menu.

Personally I do not think that as a whole this book is equal to "The Young Visiters." Only once in a decade or so is it vouchsafed the writing craft that one among us shall create a masterpiece, destined in time to become a classic and a thing immortal. Only once in an eon or so is it vouchsafed a writer to write a masterpiece at the age of nine years. Very few among us ever produce a second perfect work on top of a first one. But this I will

say—every line in this book is worthy to have been written by the same hand that wrote "The Young Visiters" and that, I think, is praise enough for any writer.

New York, April, 1920.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

THE publication of these stories gives me an opportunity of expressing my thanks for the very cordial reception which was given to "The Young Visiters." I only hope that those who have been amused at the adventures of Ethel and Mr. Salteena will not be disappointed in those of Helen Winston, Leslie Woodcock, and the others whose histories now appear.

"A Short Story of Love and Marriage," I wrote at eight years old. It was dictated to my father, who took it down faithfully word for word. My very first story, "Mr. Chapmer's Bride," which was also dictated, is among those that have been lost. "The True History of Leslie Woodcock" was a later production, and was written at about the age of eleven as a surprise for my mother on her birthday—it was originally entitled "The Q. I. B." (our family word for a secret)—but after the secret was out I changed the title. "Where Love Lies Deepest" was written

when I was twelve, and dedicated to our governess of whom I was very fond.

"The Hangman's Daughter," started at the age of about thirteen and finished the following year, I always consider the greatest literary achievement of my youth, for the reason that I put so much more effort into it than any of the others. By this time I had really determined to become an authoress (an ambition which entirely left me after my school days), and I put solid work into "The Hangman's Daughter" and really tried to write well. I shall never forget my feeling of shock when I read it aloud to my brothers and they laughed at the trial scene! A great friend of mine whose Christian name was Helen, was the heroine (Helen Winston) of this story. She was really a little younger than I was, but was far more "grown-up" in every way, a fact of which I was secretly rather "jellus," and it did not require much imagination on my part to picture what she would be at nineteen. I told her she was to be the heroine of my new novel, which I truly thought would thrill *anyone,* and I must say she was as excited as I could have wished. She will be amused now when she reads this book!

My sister Angela's story, which she wrote at the age of eight, will certainly be voted the most amusing of this collection. It was the first she ever wrote, and it was followed by "Treacherous Mr. Campbell"—another lost manuscript. A great deal of "The Jealous Governes" she wrote herself, as will be noticed by the spelling. Other portions were dictated to my father and mother, and I think the nurse had a hand at it too.

My second sister, Vera, was the artist of the nursery, and drew a wonderful poster to the only play I ever wrote, "A Woman's Crime." She wrote one story, however. It was of a pious nature, profusely illustrated, and entitled "Little Mary and the Angle."

Since the publication of "The Young Visiters," I have often been asked if I don't myself think it funny. When I first discovered it—not having seen it since it was written—I certainly did. That is one of the most curious things about it—to be able to laugh at what one wrote in such solemn seriousness—and that is why I can never feel all the nice things that have been said about "The Young Visiters," are really due to me at all, but to a Daisy Ashford of so long ago that she seems

almost another person. It has all been like a fairy tale, from the accidental finding of the original note book to the day when, at her request, I left a copy with my friend Miss Margaret Mackenzie, for it is to her I really owe the publication of the book. She showed it to Mr. Frank Swinnerton, and thus I was lucky enough to have it brought to the notice of my present publishers in England and America.

But the real success of the book I owe to the great kindness of Sir James Barrie in writing such a wonderful preface, and I am glad to have this opportunity of thanking him publicly. His name gave "The Young Visiters" a send-off and a reading which it could not have gained on its own account and of this fact I am most deeply appreciative.

DAISY ASHFORD.

March, 1920.

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A SHORT STORY OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE

A SHORT STORY OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE

CHAPTER 1

LOVE

THE house in which Mr. and Mrs. Molvern lived was one of the usual kind, with its red painted door and small garden looking out on a very dreamy park. The bed-room windows which all looked out on the front, had half dirty white curtains in them, above which could be seen dark red silk sashes of the same dirtiness.

Mr. Molvern was a red haired quick tempered gentleman, with very small grey eyes and a clever looking pink face. He would always wear brown suits, but as everybody said he looked much better in black. Mrs. Molvern was quite on the contrary. She had indeed a quiet temper, with a pale delicate looking face with large brown eyes that looked at people with great interest, and her fair hair

glistened in the sun. She usually wore half dirty white dresses, and in going out she wore a dark blue velvet jacket with black fur and a brown hat with red poppies. She never wore gloves except on Sundays and then she wore yellow cotton ones.

At the present time they had a young gentleman staying with them, who lived in the neighbourhood. He was sitting in his room waiting for the town clock to strike four, because when it did he had to go out and meet his truelove, whose name was Edith Plush. His own name was Thomas Henrick, but he was known as Burke in that family. At last hearing the hour strike, he snatched up a felt hat, and putting it on his greasy head started off to meet his truelove.

When he reached Mionge Lane he met his pretty truelove skipping along most lady-like and primly. She was dressed in a light blue dress with a white sash tied at the side in two knots. Her long fair hair hung down her back tied with a pink ribbon, and her fringe was fluttering in the breeze. Behind her fringe she wore a wreath of green ivy. In one hand she carried a leghorn hat with red and blue ribbon, and in the other a silken

bag filled with a threepenny bit and two biscuits, and her age was nineteen.

"Well my pretty bird," she said as she approached Burke, "I hope you will like to 'manger' a biscuit with me," (I may add that she was fond of French).

"Thank you Edith," he said, "I will have one if it is a cracknell."

Then Edith burst into a fit of tears and howled out, "Oh but they are Osbornes."

"Well to dry up those moist tears, I will eat one," said Burke.

"You dear!" said Edith like sunshine after rain, for the smiles had come on her face, as she opened her silken bag and popped one into his blistered hand. After this Burk and Edith walked along down the lane, which I forgot to say was shaded by trees all along.

"Burke," said Edith after a long pause, "you have talked often enough and said we shall be married one day, but when it is going to come off I am sure I don't know."

"Well my dear Edith you must recollect I am not a good dancer and have no nice suits, and you must recollect my people are not in this neighbourhood and I can't write marriage letters, and to begin with I don't think my

people would like me to be married just yet as I am not quite twenty nine."

"Well it is silly of you," said Edith, "after having talked to me so often about it, and bothered to come into my house, and sat on the drawing room sofa to make arrangements, and now you seem not to care for it a bit, just because your people are not in the neighbourhood; and besides I was getting quite excited about it!"

"If you had only a little more reason in you," said Burke, "you might take it all in and understand a bit, but you are such a great stupid, so I must leave it alone and wait till I get a chance to speak to Mrs. Molvern about it—she has got a bit of sense in her if you haven't," and his revengeful face made poor little Edith shudder. Indeed she was now too frightened to answer, and she kept on trying to go home every time she got a chance, but Burke's quick eye caught her every time.

Edith walked on slowly in front thinking what was the best way to cheer Burke out of his most moodful mind. At last she hit on a plan. "Burke," she said "I have painted such a pretty little tray, it will just hold a cup of tea and a plate of toast and the paint

is quite dry now, if you will come in and have a cup of tea with me to-day, I will gladly show it to you."

This short but cheerful conversation of Edith's, made Burke quite forget their quarrel, and he turned round and said, "I will willingly come Edith, I know your good painting,—hark, there is four o'clock striking now."

"So it is," said Edith pulling her hat more over her fringe.

Burke and Edith walked down the quiet little village in which both their houses stood. At last they arrived at Edith's house which was much prettier than Mrs. Molvern's.

"Don't you think," said Burke as he advanced to it with firm stride, "that you had better ring the bell, as you have a visitor with you?"

"Oh, no," said Edith "my mother would be sure to say if she knew it was I, that I was never to ring again, giving all that trouble to the servants; it isn't as if you were alone."

"Very well," said Burke, "I only thought perhaps it was best."

Edith smiled at him as she went up the front door steps. She led him into her pretty

little bed-room to take off his things while she took off hers.

"How very comfortable all looks" said Burke, "I feel quite inclined to write a note at that pretty little table there."

"Oh indeed but you shan't," said Edith just beginning her snappy temper, but Burke forgot to reply to her.

They then went down and had some tea and Burke much admired the pretty tray of Edith's. They had for tea some cold ham (the remainder of the luncheon) some toasted buns, a sago pudding, a dried bloater and a couple of shrimps.

After this Edith threatened to hate Burke if he would not arrange about the marriage.

"Look here, I wish you would talk of something else," said Burke, "I have a good mind not to marry you at all."

But at this Edith clung so wretchedly to his knees that he had to say, "well, to-morrow morning."

So that next morning Burke walked along down the village trying to make out where his own dear Edith could be.

Just as he was thinking of going up to her

house he saw Norah Mackie and Evelyn Slattery coming along together.

"Your friend," they said chaffingly, "is picking some old geraniums in the front garden."

Burke stared at them straight and putting out his tongue once or twice, walked on to find his darling pet.

"I wish my sister Mary was here," echoed Evelyn, "she would soon strike out at you." And they walked on grumbling at his impudence.

CHAPTER 2

MARRIAGE

"WELL pretty dear," said Burke as he approached Edith's garden.

"Angel! I have been waiting for you to come and talk about the wedding."

"Yes I am perfectly settled," said Burke, and he began: "I have written to my people and they have written back to say yes I may marry you, and kind Mrs. Molvern is having such a nice wedding suit made for me, and I think we will be prepared to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony next Thursday."

"Thank you so much," said Edith "suppose we talk about it now here on this sunny bench."

Burke lifted up his coat tails and squatted himself down. "The first thing to find out about," he said, "is about asking Father Fanty to marry us."

"Yes, now I have hit upon a plan this very minute," said Edith, "you will write a letter to him. I have got a rather crumpled bit of paper in my pocket, and as most men have got a pen in their pockets most likely you have got one."

"Indeed I have," said Burke, "and a three-penny blotter too."

As for ink, Edith had a halfpenny bottle in her pocket. So Burke began like this:

"Dear Rev. Father Fanty,

I hope your kindness does not mind marrying us Miss Edith Plush and myself. We are both capable of receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony on Thursday next if quite convenient to you. Hoping you will excuse my craving for Matrimony,

Your sincerely,

Thomas Henrick."

Burke told Edith's maid to run to the Presbytery with the letter and wait for an answer. About a quarter of an hour afterwards this exquisite and most graceful letter came from Father Fanty.

"MOST DEAR T. HENRICK,

On Thursday I am free from all engagement and am most willing to marry you, and give a charming wedding breakfast in my lovely harmonium room. So with my best congratulations on your coming marriage,

I am,

Your affectionate priest,

FATHER FANTY."

So on the following Thursday Burke and Edith were dressed as I shall mention now. The timid darling lady had on a most lovely sky blue coloured dress with a high bustle, and it was blossomed over with sham daisies tied on with green ribbon. On her head she wore a wreath of yellow roses, and her white veil reached down to the top of her stays. White kid gloves, and as the sleeves of her dress were rather short, her red beef coloured hands showed between. She had pretty white

velvet boots with grass green buttons, and washed out red stockings. In her hand she held a bunch of green ivy.

The strong and bold bridegroom wore a red swallow tailed coat, with a green silk sash tied in front. He had black knickerbockers and white woollen socks, and black dressing slippers, and he carried a bowler in his hand.

When they arrived at the church the marriage was splendid, but the bare legs of Burke were not much appreciated.

For the wedding breakfast they had several cups of Bouillon Fleet, and eight of Bovril. They had six Vanilla cream puddings and strawberry ices by the score; but they kept the blinds drawn down in case vulgar little boys should loom in and say "give us a slice," while the leg of pork was being cut.

For their honeymoon, they went to the south of India, and seven hours after they got there they had two twin babies, a boy and a girl which they called Abraham and Sarah, because they were fond of those holy saints.

So we will say goodbye to this two chaptered story.

THE TRUE HISTORY OF LESLIE WOODCOCK

To

DEAREST MOTHER

FROM

DAISY ON HER BIRTHDAY

THE TRUE HISTORY OF LESLIE WOODCOCK

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING THE FAMILY

"Sylvia Sylvia" cried a man's voice in the hall. "Where is that child?"

"Coming" answered the child for so she was always called by her Uncle Richard although in years she was close on 19.

And she turned to obey the summons, a deep flush mounted to her usually too pale cheeks, and lighted up her whole countenance.

Sylvia Monton was little more than a baby when her parents were both drowned whilst on their way to India where Captain Monton was to join his regiment. So little Sylvia was left an orphan and her mothers only brother Richard Earlsdown came forward to take charge of her being a bachelor and possessing no children of his own.

At the time our history opens Sylvia was a

tall thin girl with a fair and saddened face, which was only enlivened by the sky blue of her eyes—she had golden hair which she wore combed back from her white and noble forehead and arranged in heavy waves round her small and shapely head——a small rosebud mouth which when wide open displayed 2 rows of pearly white teeth. Small white hands adorned by 3 golden rings and a tiny round nose which she daintily touched now and again with a lace hankerchief.

It was 3 oclock on a dismal afternoon late in February and the place was on the boarders of the Sussex downs.

"What a rainy day for our walk Uncle" sighed Sylvia as she approached her uncle who was still waiting in the hall.

"I wish it were finer my dear" said Mr. Earlsdown opening a large unbrella manfully.

Mr. Earlsdown was an elderly man between 50 and 60, he had iron grey hair and a long bushy beard to corrospond, sharp grey eyes and a would be handsome face but for a stern forbidding expression it habitually wore. He was broad and stout and had a manfull way of carelessly swinging his arms that gave him many friends. Not only this but he had a loud

hearty voice that he knew how to use with a will.

Here Mr. Earlsdown proceeded to turn up his trouser tips and offering his large umbrella to his niece cried in his hearty voice "let us brave the storm."

Just then a gust of wind blew Sylvia's dainty toque down a side street. "Oh uncle" she gasped dropping the gingham in her dismay "do go and fetch it," but ere she uttered the words a tall handsome fellow approached bearing his head and displaying the lost hat in his hand.

"Oh thank you" cried Sylvia a beautiful blush mounting her fair cheeks "I am so very grateful to you."

"I am afraid it is rather dusty" said the newcomer taking out a lovely silk hankerchief and preparing to wipe the charming object

"Don't trouble sir" said Mr. Earlsdown and taking out a large red kerchief he seized the hat in his huge hand and pounded it vigorously. "Oh uncle gently" cried Sylvia "you will spoil my feathers

"I know what I am about my dear" said Mr. Earlsdown "and you sir come and see us

to-morrow, my child will be glad of a caller."

"Oh indeed I shall" cried Sylvia blushing.

And Leslie Woodcock, for that was the handsome fellows name raised his hat and bowed low saying "I shall be delighted my dear sir, but might I ask what your address is.

"Certainly my man" exclaimed Mr. Earlsdown as with a hearty laugh he produced a little card on which was written

R. Earlsdown Esq,
Yellowflower Hall
Mayfield Sussex

Leslie bowed once more and taking the card moved gently away. What took place after this will be reserved for our next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LESLIE WOODCOCK

The hero of my story I will now describe.

Leslie Woodcock was about 6 feet in his stockings and fine and well built. He had very dark brown hair neatly parted at one side, a curly moustache of the same shade and deep brown eyes always half shut. He had a

large straight nose and mouth to correspond and white well shaped hands and feet, that set off this good looking young man.

It was about half past 3 oclock on the following afternoon when Leslie Woodcock dressed in a light grey suit and crimson tie, black felt bowler and fur lined overcoat, started for Yellowflower Hall.

Sylvia who had been expecting him all the morning was pleased to hear the front door bell ring, and hurried to the window to wave her hand, as she knew it *must* be the good looking stranger.

Just then the drawing room door was flung open and the butler announced Mr. Woodcock "Oh good afternoon" said Sylvia rushing from the window to greet the visitor "how good of you to come in all this pouring rain."

"It was a bad day to come, but I was true to my word" answered our hero warmly shaking hands.

"Yes indeed how wet you must be" said Sylvia and then turning to the butler she added "Johnson inform Mr. Earlsdown that Mr. Woodcock is here."

In about 3 minutes a heavy step was heard

and Mr. Earlsdown came bounding into the room laughing loudly.

"How do Mr. Woodcock" he gasped between his peals of laughter "I didn't at all expect you, in fact I forgot all about you" and here he sank into a chair and offered a snuff box to his friend.

"Thanks" said Leslie streching out his long thin fingers and taking a small pinch which he silently dropped on the floor as being so young he was afraid it would make him sick.

"You'll stop to tea wont you?" asked Sylvia arranging the folds of her green silk dress.

"Thank you I will if it is no trouble" said Leslie and a smile passed over his thin lips.

In a few moments Johnson and another footman brought in tea from the conservatory on a silver tray.

"Now Mr. Woodcock please to help yourself" said Mr. Earlsdown offering him three or four plates of sugar and other cakes. Leslie took a small jam wafer and proceeded to nibble it quietly. "How far did you come?" asked the girl as she was busy pouring out tea.

"Not very far" responded Leslie lifting his full brown eyes to her face. "I live in Astma House upon the high road.

"Oh I see" replied Sylvia with a nod of her fair head. "you have sisters and brothers then? for I have seen them coming in and out."

"I have two sisters and a cousin" replied Leslie.

"Oh what are their names? asked Sylvia who had a very curious nature.

"My sisters are Violet and Hilda and my cousin is Albert Morris."

"*Oh* what sweet names" cried the girl "I wish you would bring them here some day."

"Perhaps I will" said Leslie "but Albert does not care for calling he is a very quiet fellow.

"I am sure I should like him. I love boys" said Sylvia.

Here Leslie thought he had better be going so taking his hat and gloves he shook hands after first promising to bring his family the next time he came.

CHAPTER 3

THE BALL

About 3 months after the events recorded in our last chapter Mr. Woodcock decided to give

a ball in honour of his daughter Violets coming of age. So he sent out about 20 invitations and Leslie made quite sure that Sylvia was amongst the list of invited people.

At last the happy day arrived and as the carriages drew up in front of Astma House Leslie's form might be seen standing on the door step looking out for when Sylvia would arrive. At last she came and Leslie offered his hand to help her up the steps.

Sylvia was attired in costly white satin with an edging of beaver round the skirt. The body was trimmed with real Venetian Point. Upon her hands she wore pink kid gloves and in her hair a pink may blossom. Her small well formed feet were clad in white high heeled shoes and silk stockings.

"I am afraid I am late Leslie" she said as she entered the hall "but I had such a bother to fix my hair, my maid was out you see" she added blushing

"Oh never mind" said Leslie taking Sylvia's cloak and hanging it up "let us come into the drawing room and join in this walse.

Sylvia's programme was soon filled and she danced till she was tired and at last while resting in an arm chair she was not sorry to see

Hilda Woodcock approaching her with a strawberry ice.

"Leslie is going to bring you some jelly or cream pudding in a minute" she said handing Sylvia the tray.

In an instant Leslie came up to her and handing her a jelly retired quickly saying he would be back soon.

At that moment Sylvia felt a touch on her arm and looking round found herself face to face with Albert Morris, a short red haired young man about 22.

"Oh what is it?" cried Sylvia jumping up from her seat.

"Nothing much" replied Albert quietly "only as you are disingaged will you have a valse with me."

"I really can't" answered Sylvia hotly "I *am* so tired. I have been dancing all the evening."

"Very well" said Albert and he went away and Sylvia turning round saw Leslie sitting beside a young lady gently fanning her and talking to her.

An angry flush mounted to her fair cheeks and for a moment she could barely keep her temper, then without a minutes hesitation she

walked boldly towards Leslie and his friend. Leslie jumped up when he saw her approach "I was just coming to look for you Sylvia" he said and getting up he followed her to the end of the room.

"Who was that person I saw you talking to so lovingly?" asked Sylvia.

"Oh that was Isobel May Saunders, a great friend of mine" replied Leslie with a short laugh.

"So I should think a *great* friend" answered Sylvia angrily "and by the way you were talking to her I should think you were engaged to her."

"Look here Sylvia don't be angry" said Leslie slowly "but I *was* going to have made her my wife once but since I met you I have thought better of it—please don't say any more about it."

"Oh Leslie" cried Sylvia in surprise "but does the poor girl believe that you love her

"To tell you the truth Sylvia" replied Leslie getting very red as he spoke "my belief is that Isobel thinks I love her and as I can not throw her over altogether that is why you saw me speaking to her just then."

"But what is your reason for not marrying her?" cried Sylvia.

"Well because I thought I would rather marry someone else" said Leslie blushing and looking straight into her face.

"But who do you want to marry?" said Sylvia blushing in her turn.

"You dearest" he replied in an undertone "ever since the day I came to call upon your uncle I have set my heart on making you my wife. Do you think you love me enough to marry me?"

"I think I do Leslie" said Sylvia getting very hot "but I must speak to uncle about it first."

"Don't forget" said Leslie in a beseeching tone "and let me know as soon as possible."

So the whole of that evening Leslie and Sylvia kept together but as Leslie was helping Sylvia on with her cloak, Sylvia saw Isobel Saunders gazing at Leslie with a look which went straight to her heart.

CHAPTER 4

AFTER THE BALL

BEFORE we go on any further we had better say a word about Isobel Saunders.

She was the only daughter of Colonel Saunders of the 159th who having lost a lot of money in the army was now in very poor circumstances. His wife had died five years previously and left him with three sons and a daughter. The eldest son William was a tall stout elderly man of about 25 who followed his father's profession. Robert the next was fair and delicate looking taking after his mother and lived very much at home and was just 21 years of age. The youngest son Frederick who was Isobel's junior by 4 years was still at school.

Isobel, who at the time my story opens had just attained the age of 20 years was 5 feet 3 inches in height, she had thick dark hair fashionably dressed and a massive fringe over her stately forehead. She had bewitching brown eyes from which long lashes swept her cheeks. She had an aqueline nose and a

bright complextion. She had nice feet and was fairly podgy.

It was 10 o'clock on the morning after the ball, when Colonel Saunders came into the breakfast room with an open letter in his hand.

"Here is some news for you Isobel" he said "Your aunt Miss Vickers intends favouring us with one of her weekly visits she will arrive this afternoon by the 3 o'clock train, so mind and have everything ready or there will be a fine fuss."

"Oh dear" exclaimed Isobel preparing to pour out the whisky for her father. "I always dread Aunt Sophia's visits."

"Yes indeed she is an old nuisance but we must make the best of her and after all a week is not long."

"That is true" replied Isobel "but still it adds to my other troubles." and with a sigh she ran up to prepare the bedroom.

The town clock was striking 4 when a cab drew up at Vebena Villa and Isobel flew to open the front door.

"How are you dear Aunt! she exclaimed.

"Well my dear I am not as well as might be expected. I have had a severe cold and my servants have worried me so much I thought

a week's rest might do me good." answered the fidgety dame hastening into the drawing room and taking a seat she proceeded to give Isobel a list of all her complaints and when she had come to an end of them she turned to her niece saying "Please tell Jane to take my box up and then after I have had some tea I will go to bed, I have had a long and fatiging journey."

Here will be a good time to explain Miss Vickers, she was tall and angular and thin with black hair slightly grey which she wore in an untidy nob behind, she had dark piereing eyes that always seemed to find out other people's business.

Isobel smiled as the door closed on the tall and portly frame of her aunt and she began to re-arrange the room which already in 10 minutes Miss Vickers had turned upside down.

CHAPTER 5

AFTER THE BALL (*continued*)

WHILST this scene was taking place at Vebena Villa, a very different one was going on at Yellowflower Hall.

While sitting at the breakfast table Sylvia Monton was wondering how to ask her uncle if she might come to terms with Leslie Woodcock.

Presently Mr. Earlsdown rose from his chair and seizing his pipe he entered his study roaring 'Private Tommy Atkins' at the top of his loud voice.

"I am afraid my uncle is in one of his boisterous moods" sighed Sylvia finishing her coffee, "but he does get so excited poor uncle especially when he has been out the night before. I don't remember seeing much of him at the ball. I was so taken up with Leslie. I am rather glad I did not see him though for nothing would induce him to wear evening clothes or a shirt front and he insisted on going in his bicycling suit and such a soiled red tie and *oh* his hair it was really like a crows nest, I don't know what Mr. and Mrs. Woodcock would have said if he had suddenly burst out with that dreadful 'Tommy Atkins.' but there poor uncle he *has* such spirits."

So saying Sylvia skipped into her uncle's study.

"Hullo hullo my lassie" he cried tossing down last week's 'Pick me up.'

"I wanted to speak to you Uncle" said Sylvia putting her trembling hand on Mr. Earlsdown's shoulder.

"Talk away then" said Mr. Earlsdown "I am prepared for the very worst news."

"It's nothing much" said the girl "only—

"Wake up wake up my child" said her uncle "only what?"

"Only that Leslie Woodcock has asked me to marry him and with your permission I will accept."

"I dare say you will" said Mr. Earlsdown "but I am not going to give my consent" replied the excitable gentleman "I am not going to see you marry a begger."

"But uncle he is not a begger" cried Sylvia "he is well off, honest and dependable"

"I dare say he is all that" said Mr. Earlsdown "dependable indeed! why ten to one when you have been married to him a month he will devoice you for some other girl he is silly enough to prefer; no no you shall marry a lord, that is what I want for my money, so next time you see young Woodcock just send him about his business, impudent young fellow!!"

"Uncle have *some* mercy" here burst from

Sylvia's pale lips "I'll never marry any one else" and with a cry of "Leslie *my* Leslie" she fled from the room and flinging herself on her own bed gave way to bitter tears.

But finally taking heart of grace she siezed her blotting book and poured forth these heart rending words.

My own,

Owing to my merciless uncle I am forced to give you up as he thinks to marry a lord, but *no never!* my Leslie and although I may never see you again think of me always as I shall of you and believe me to be

Yours and yours alone

Sylvia.

CHAPTER 6

THE ELOPEMENT

It was past 2 o'clock before Leslie received Sylvia's wretched appeal.

It was brought to him in his room whilst dressing for an afternoon party. Leslie read it carefully through and then throwing it on the floor seezed his head in his hands and thought it over.

Presently he looked up with a determined expression on his face "I must marry her" he cried, and then sitting down he picked up a sheet of writing paper and prepared to answer the note and this was what he said.

MY BEST LOVED

If you will agree to this plan I will marry you yet. Have all your wants packed up this evening by 6 o'clock and we will elope together dearest and when we are one, we will go to America and make our fortunes.

Ever dearest

YOUR OWN LESLIE.

He then told one of the servants to take the above to Yellowflower Hall and give it into Miss Monton's hands, and wait for her answer.

The servant soon returned to say that the young lady would agree to the plan.

Leslie then began to collect his stockings and under garments and whilst rummaging in his wardrobe he heard something drop on the floor. He stooped to pick it up, it was a photograph of Isobel Saunders.

"Poor Isobel" murmured Leslie and wrapping the photo up he put it in his pocket. "I

wonder what she will think of me when she knows."

At 5 o'clock the housemaid came to tell tea was ready.

"Oh bring me a cup of tea up here, "I am not feeling very well" said Leslie as she closed the door.

At ¼ to 6 Leslie slipped out by the back door. He was attired in a long old fashioned ulster, a deer stalking cap, large golosha boots, and a hunting suit as he had gone to hunt for Sylvia. On his right arm he carried a bag containing clean under linen and other odds and ends also his money consisting of £40 in ready gold. He entered the garden of Yellow-flower Hall and stole up unseen to Sylvia's room. He found her standing by the table buttoning her jacket with nervous trembling fingers.

"Oh Leslie!" she cried as he entered the room "I am so glad you have come" and saying this she fell back in a chair and fainted dead away.

Leslie caught hold of the water jug and wetting a sponge applied it to her white face, and by this and the aid of smelling saults, Sylvia soon revived.

"I am so nervous" she said "Oh Leslie shall we ever get away in safety?"

"Yes dearest yes" whispered the lover, "trust me darling and you will be alright."

"I am ready now" said Sylvia in a weak voice as she put a packet of biscuits into her bundle.

"I'll carry your luggage" said Leslie picking up her bundle which was tied in a white tablecloth.

Sylvia had been more particular than Leslie as to her luggage. Besides all her underlinen she had with her two pairs of clean sheets and pillow cases, some bath towels and soap, likewise a sponge and a yard of flannel (in case she lost any) a flask of brandy, some new potatoes and a tooth brush.

Sylvia's window opened into the lawn so it was easy to escape and once off the high road she and Leslie felt safe.

CHAPTER 7

THE LODGINGS

Leslie and Sylvia having tramped until midnight found themselves weary and footsore at London.

"I can't afford very good lodgings" said Leslie "my money must last until I get employment.

"Where shall we go then?" said Sylvia.

"To some common lodging house" said Leslie "you see *you* have clean sheets if they are needful—ah there is the lodging house."

So he and Sylvia approached a filthy house at the end of a narrow street, Leslie knocked at the door and after waiting 10 minutes a dirty old woman with a candle in her hand, opened the door.

"What is it you want? she said, "disturbing me this time of night!"

"We have come for a lodging" said our hero "how much would it be?"

"4d a night single" said the old woman "and 2d extra if you want a drop of water to wash with."

Leslie's heart sank within him at these words but he felt bound to accept saying "I hope the beds and the water are clean."

"Clean enough I'm sure" said the old woman "considering they have only been used a few times." so saying she led them up a rickety stair case into a shabby little room.

"The bed ain't made yet said Old Nan pointing to a heap of rags in the corner.

"Thank you" said Leslie and locking the door he turned to Sylvia who by this time was wandering hopelessly about the filthy garret.

"We'll make the bed anyhow" said Leslie "get out your sheets Sylvia."

She obeyed and Leslie kneeling on the floor began to sort out the rags. He found an old blanket which being a shade cleaner than the others he laid upon the floor covering it with a clean sheet; then stuffing his jacket inside the pillow case he made it into a pillow, he then laid another sheet over that and covered it with his and Sylvia's overcoats, he pronounced the bed made.

"How very dreadful!" gasped Sylvia "I can not sleep upon that bed."

"You must" said Leslie throwing open the window to air the room.

The next morning Leslie, who had sat by the open window all night began to collect the bed clothes and turning to Sylvia said "we will get out of this as soon as ever we can."

Then finding a drop of filthy water in a cracked basin he proceeded to wash his face

and hands, though Sylvia said she would rather go dirty than use such water.

Just then Old Nan entred and looking round said "well now I hope you have had a pleasant night."

"Oh very" stammered poor Leslie.

"I think we are going now, if you will tell me what it comes to."

"Well let me see" said Old Nan

"2 beds and 2 washes——

"But I didn't wash" said Sylvia

"And *I* didn't go to bed" said Leslie

"Then it will be 6d growled Old Nan. and after paying their landlady Leslie and Sylvia fled for their lives.

CHAPTER 9

THE MARRIAGE

"I WONDER where we can find a church to be married in" said Sylvia.

"We dont look as though we were *going* to be married" said Leslie "and I feel so soiled after sleeping in that lodging house."

"I should think you do" said Sylvia "I never

felt so dirty in my life—why there is a church Leslie"

"Yes I know but I mean to buy you a white veil and a piece of lace" said Leslie "here is a shilling get what you can"

Sylvia hurried across the road and soon returned with a yard of book muslin for a veil and ½ a yard of furniture lace.

"That will do" said Leslie and they entered the church.

A middle aged man was busy lighting the church lamps and stared hopelessly as the couple entered.

"Please are you the clergyman?" asked Leslie.

"No" said the man "Mr. Roberts who is sorting surplices in the vestry is the parson."

"Can we speak to him" said Leslie quietly

"Yes sir" replied the man opening the vestry door.

"Oh are you the clergyman?" said Leslie to a tall dark man who was just folding up some clean linen.

"Yes I am" replied the said gentleman "can I do anything for you?"

"Well we wanted to be married" said Leslie bashfully "if this young lady may put her veil

on in the vestry we could then wait in the church till you are at leisure."

"Yes I think I have time" said Mr. Roberts glancing at his watch "please sign your names in this book and I will ring the bell for the acolyte"

So saying he touched a spring bell and very soon a small fair-haired boy appeared in the door way.

"Take two lighted candles into the church Tommy" said Mr. Roberts "and place two kneeling chairs in the aisle."

Tommy obeyed and very soon Sylvia and Leslie were kneeling side by side in the church.

About 5 minutes afterwards our hero and heroine walked out husband and wife!!

"Let us have our wedding breakfast at the Gaiety restaurant" said Leslie and hailing a handsom the married couple stepped in.

"What would you like my dear" said Leslie sitting down at a ready laid table.

"I'd like rabbit pie and apple fritters and a cup of coffee please" said Sylvia throwing off her gloves and displaying her newly put on wedding ring.

"Very good my dear" said Leslie "and I will have a slice of roast pork and suet pudding

and treacle and beer and soda mixed that is a mild B and S my dear"

Half way through his pork Leslie pulled out a letter from his pocket and after piercing at it for two or three minutes he read as follows.

Homer Villa, Margate.

DEAR SIR,

I shall be very please to acomodate you for a fortnight. You can have a good sized bedroom, parlour and dining room for 3 guineas per week including everything else. I shall expect you tonight so

Believe me to be

Yours very truly

MARY MASON.

"This *is* good news my dear" said Leslie "if you have done your pie we will take the first train to Margate, hand me your bundle and we will start."

It was not a very long journey but Sylvia who was very tired was not sorry to hear the porters screaming "Margate station."

A pony cart from Homer Villa was waiting for them and Leslie and Sylvia were soon at their lodgings.

A fat good tempered looking woman showed

them into a comfortable parlour where a lovely tea consisting of ham sandwiches, poached eggs, tea and bread and butter was waiting for them. And here we will leave them to enjoy it while we take the train back to Mayfield.

CHAPTER 10

THE CONFUSION

About ¼ to 8 o'clock the dressing bell at Yellowflower Hall pealed forth its usual summons.

"I am glad dinner is so nearly ready" said untidy Mr. Earlsdown straightening his tie and running a comb through his hair "I'll go and have a quiet glass of claret while I am waiting—perhaps Sylvia will appear by then."

Mr. Earlsdown had just drained his glass when Johnson brought in some pea soup, bacon and green cabbage, merangues and chocolate pudding.

"Don't trouble about ringing the second bell Johnson" said Mr. Earlsdown "just call Miss Monton and I will begin."

So saying he began to serve out the bacon on a golden plate.

"Where is that child" said Mr. Earlsdown after having 3 serves of the bacon.

Just then Johnson entered with a very long face "If you please sir" he said "Miss Monton is nowhere in the house and her room Mary says is *that* untidy, you'd think a wild menagerie had been there."

"Bless my life" exclaimed Mr. Earlsdown throwing down his fork and tossing his table napkin to the butler.

Forthwith he rushed upstairs to his niece's room and the sight which met his eyes was enough to astonish even Mr. Earlsdown. A pile of linen stood in a corner of the room, hats, jackets and various articles of clothing were scattered in every direction and at last on the bed a letter adressed in Sylvia's hand to himself and this is what it said.

UNCLE,

Please do not worry yourself about me. I am quite safe under the charge of Leslie Woodcock. We shall be in London to-night but from that day forth I dont know where we shall be. My name from now is

SYLVIA WOODCOCK.

As Mr. Earlsdown read this coldly worded epistle he flashed his eyes and stamped heavily on the floor.

"Why bless the girl" he screamed "I'll have her back within an inch of her life" so saying he tore out of the bedroom and called for Johnson.

The butler came running upstairs to receive his orders.

Johnson take the first train to London and search everywhere for traces of Mr. and Mrs. Woodcock" and handing the butler 2/6 he sent him off by the 8.8 to London.

Meanwhile there was also great confusion at Astmer House. On the summons to dinn Leslie was found missing.

"Dear me" exclaimed Mrs. Woodcock jumping up and knocking over a soup tureen "Albert go and look for your cousin."

"Oh *he* is alright" answered Albert "there is no need to fuss."

"Yes there is you heartless boy, go and look for my son at once."

"Oh bother" said Albert flinging down his book.

"Dont snap" said Mrs. Woodcock as Albert dashed furiously out of the room.

He returned within ¼ of an hour to say he could find no traces of Leslie except his toothbrush in the back garden and a pocket handkerchief on the stairs.

"Oh I hope he is not lost" cried Mrs. Woodcock "my dear son, where can he be?"

"Oh but you have me" said Albert with a faint smile.

"What do I care for you?" said Mrs. Woodcock bitterly.

Albert immediately began shuffling about and took a drink of water to hide his blushes.

"As you are so *very* stupid" continued Mrs. Woodcock "perhaps you can *manage* to walk far as Yellowflower Hall and see if you find any traces of Leslie."

Albert pushed on his hat and stamped out and returned in ½ hour in a rather more excited mood than he went out.

"I say Aunt" he cried running into the dining room "would you believe it just by that railing near Yellowflower Hall I found Miss Monton's shoe and Leslie's watch key, I brought both back to show it is true."

Mrs. Woodcock uttered a terrified "Oh" and sank nearly unconscious on the sofa.

CHAPTER 11

JOHNSON'S SEARCH

JOHNSON arrived in London at 25 minutes to ten. It was a dark foggy night and the air was cold. Johnson gave a shiver as he wrapped his ulster round him.

He wandered hopelessly about for an hour or two and oddly enough he took the very same lodgings as Sylvia and Leslie had spent their first night in London; being in that part of the city and too tired to look for better apartments.

Towards noon on the following day Johnson encountered a friend, Thomas Bench by name, and forgetting all about his errand he turned into a public house close by to enjoy a quiet drink with his friend.

"What are you up here for Jim?" said Thomas Bench.

"Well" said Johnson stirring up his hot whisky and water "its rather a serious matter, my master's niece has gone and run away with her young man and I am on the look out for her."

"Aye aye" answered Bench scratching his oily head "what sort of a young miss is she eh?"

"Well she's a pretty sort of girl with plenty of fair hair and blue eyes there is no mistaking she belongs to the upper ten my man"

"Oh indeed" replied Bench taking a piece of blue paper from his pocket "what is the young lady's name?"

"Miss Morton by your leave" roared the butler.

"Well" replied Bench "look here." Johnson snatched the bit of crumpled paper and read it through. On the paper was written

Miss Sylvia Monton.
Homer Villa, Margate.

"Mercy" screamed Johnson "wherever did you find it?"

"Well" replied Thomas Bench "I was walking in Orange Alley where old Nan lives and outside the door I found this scrap of paper, what do you think it means old pal?"

"I should say" said Johnson biting his lips "it looks as though it meant that our young lady had taken up her abode there."

"So should I" said Bench with a broad grin and so saying the two men walked out arm in arm. Outside they parted and Johnson took the first train for Margate and whilst waiting at the station a telegram was brought to him by dirty old Nan.

Tearing it open he found it was from Mayfield saying Mr. Earlsdown was dying and he was wanted at once.

"Oh lor!" ejaculated the butler making a rush for the ticket office. Johnson did not arrive at Mayfield till 4.0 o'clock, then he instantly made his way to Mr. Earlsdown's bedroom.

All the servants in the household were standing round the bed and on it lay the unconscious figure of Mr. Earlsdown.

"What is it?" cried Johnson pushing his way through the crowd.

"Appoplexy" answered Susan the housemaid holding her apron to her streaming eyes "the poor dear master was so excited thinking about Miss Monton and then all of a sudden he received a note telling of the engagement of Mr. Albert Morris with Miss Saunders and then that sent him off because he always wanted Mr. Albert to marry Miss Mon-

ton, and when Mary went into the drawing room, there he was in a fit."

Just then the door opened and in walked Doctor Mason. The result of his visit will be seen later on.

CHAPTER 12

SYLVIA'S RETURN

It was a beautiful morning about 3 or 4 days after our hero and heroine's arrival at Margate. Leslie was just finishing his coffee and toast and Sylvia was sitting near the window glancing over the morning paper.

Suddenly her rosy face turned deadly pale and the paper nearly dropped from her trembling fingers.

"What is is dearest?" asked Leslie placing his arm around her waist and kissing her pallid forehead "has anything in the paper shaken your nerves?"

"Oh Leslie Leslie" shrieked Sylvia falling into his arms "read this and be satisfied that my nerves *are* shaken."

Leslie siezed the paper and read as follows:

"Mayfield Sussex. Last Tuesday Mr. Richard George Earlsdown of Yellowflower Hall was siezed with appoplexy. On that same day he had prevented his neice from marrying a certain gentleman of the neighbourhood and *she* has run away with her intended, viz Mr. Leslie Alexander Woodcock.

Mr. Earlsdown is now repenting that his consent was not given to his heartless niece and that if she comes back before he dies, married or unmarried, she will receive his love and forgiveness for ever; he is now in a dying state and we fear that unless his niece soon returns he will decidedly expire."

"Shall you go home" asked Leslie quietly.

"Yes yes" exclaimed Sylvia "Oh Leslie help me to pack, I feel too weak."

The trunks were soon packed and the heart broken couple were on their way to Mayfield. Arriving at the Hall Sylvia flew up to her uncle's room and throwing herself on the floor shook the room with ear piercing sobs.

"Who is crying?" presently asked Mr. Earlsdown.

"It is me uncle—your repentant niece."

Mr. Earlsdown gave a contented smile and

turned away his head. Presently he turned round and his eyes fell upon Sylvia's white hand on the counterpane.

"Mrs. Woodcock I see" he said with a smile looking at the golden wedding ring on Sylvia's third finger.

"Yes Uncle" said Sylvia in a low tone "But you wont leave me till I am better will you child" said her uncle.

"Never uncle" said Sylvia "never to your dying day."

CHAPTER 13

HOW IT ENDED

SEVEN years have elapsed since the events told in our last chapter and our scene once more changes to the ball room at Asmer House. Leslie and Sylvia no longer newly married people are sitting by the piano and opposite to them on the sofa are Isobel Saunders and Albert Woodcock. Presently Albert advances to the piano and asks Sylvia to sing a song.

"Yes if I can get anyone to play my accompaniment" says Sylvia.

"I only wish I could play" said Albert rub-

bing his face and looking with sad eyes at Mrs. Woodcock. Immediately Isobel seated herself at the piano and ran her fairy like fingers over the notes while Sylvia's melodious voice kept time to the music; and as the beautiful words of "See the conquering hero comes" rang out like a peal of thunder, Mr. Earlsdown come bounding in.

Here the band struck up God save the Queen and everybody stood up in respectful silence; and as the last notes of the German band died away Mrs. Woodcock took leave of her friends as we will do of the characters of this book.

THE END

WHERE LOVE LIES DEEPEST

WHERE LOVE LIES DEEPEST

CHAPTER 1

THE silvery moon rises slowly above the mountains of white clouds and sheds its quiet light upon one of the most beautiful scenes of the sheltered nooks in the picturesque county of Devonshire. The tall green hills, so thickly covered with wild thyme rise clear and high against the blue sky above. The rippling waters of a little streamlet glide softly upon its way through lovely banks of sweet green moss. Presently a white cloud envelopes the pale moon and all is darkness!

Only for a moment, the cloud passes away and the bright light pours down upon two figures. The one the tall slim figure of a young girl, the other the broad well built figure of a richly dressed man. He wore a beautifully made blue serge suit and a white tie fastened with a gold and diamond pin. His felt hat fitted as though it had been made for him and

his light overcoat and kid gloves were like the rest of his toilet well made and of a rich material. His black hair grew thickly on his head and his brown eyes glared fiercely, his brown skin was red with rage and his white teeth were clenched.

The girl on the contrary was poorly dressed and did not seem at home in the presence of the rich man. She wore a pale grey dress trimmed with green velvet. It had seen its best days for it was worn in many places. She wore a straw hat and a white scarf round her neck. She was a lovely girl!! Her plentiful golden hair was coiled into a knob behind and cut in a small fringe in front. Her large blue eyes spoke of many mysteries and were fringed by golden lashes. Her cherry coloured lips were small and pressed together in her nervous state. Her white teeth were clenched and she trembled under the viscious glare of her companion.

"I tell you Beatrice you are out of your senses, you must be, there is no doubt of it, how can you refuse such an offer?" said the man fiercely.

"Oh Lawrence do listen to me," said the unhappy girl, "it is impossible, it cannot be.

You are very kind, and I always had and always shall have a very great respect for you, but I cannot marry you, indeed I cannot! we are no match, I am poor and you are rich. Besides I have a reason for not accepting you for my husband. Oh Lawrence you make me so unhappy!" and here the poor girl stopped short, gave a hurried look round and pressed her hand to her heart.

"Beatrice Langton you are a lunatic" cried the man, "give me an answer straight out—yes or no. Will you be my wife? Speak out and dont go jibbering on in that sentimental fashion; say yes and you will live in luxury and riches for the rest of your life, say no and you go home poor and degraded. Now give me an answer Yes or No!"

The girl raised her head and spoke thus—"Lawrence I am very sorry to say it but my answer is No! Goodbye Mr. Cathcart, goodbye Lawrence, perhaps we shall never meet again. What? you will not even shake hands! Very well, goodnight Lawrence, goodnight."

She turned and went away leaving him in the darkness.

CHAPTER 2

BEATRICE LANGTON'S HOME

When Beatrice went away she made straight for her home for it was close on nine and her mother would be anxious. Her heart was heavy and her eyelids were wet with fast falling tears as she made her way accross the desolate moor. Presently she came to the stream and after crossing the bridge she made for the common. On the outskirts of the village stood her home. A little brown cottage with carefully trimmed roses and jasmine creeping up the porch and a neat little garden in front. She opened the gate, walked up the path and opened the door.

What a pleasant scene was there before her! A bright fire was burning in the well kept hearth and an old lady sat beside it knitting stockings for the coming winter. Many pictures adorned the walls. A gentleman was writing at a table in the window. Three little girls all in red frocks and white pinnafores were employed in different ways. The eldest was some ten years old with curly hair and

blue eyes and was busy with some corn-flowers and poppies in a glass vase. The other two who looked about eight and six had brown eyes and very fair hair (and) were looking at a book at the middle table. They all jumped up as Beatrice entered.

"Why Beatrice dear how late you are!" said Mrs. Langton "I sent your supper down. "Mary, ring the bell, Beatrice must be hungry."

"No I am not," answered Beatrice smiling wearily and seating herself in the chair her sister had placed for her, "I am only very tired and would like to go to bed."

"Oh you must have something," said Mr. Langton, "Cook made some lovely cheese cakes for supper, and you shall have some wine to drink."

Just then the maid entered, and in spite of herself Beatrice was soon enjoying a hearty meal.

"Oh there is half past nine!" cried Mrs. Langton, "Lily and Tina go to bed at once, Mary can wait up for Beatrice if she likes."

The two little children ran off hand in hand murmering "lucky Mary."

CHAPTER 3

It was eight o'clock next morning when Beatrice opened her weary eyes and look round her little room. She jumped up immediately and ran down to breakfast.

Her father had just gone off to his farming, but her mother was sitting in her accustomed place by the fireside reading a letter which was evidently causing her some anxiety.

"Well Mother" cried Beatrice, "what is the matter?"

"Well dear" replied Mrs. Langton, sipping her tea as she spoke, "I have had a letter from Mrs. Vindsor who went abroad last year, and she wants you to go and spend the winter with her in Paris. I would like you to go dear, but you are my eldest child and you are by no means strong."

"Oh Mother do let me go, I should enjoy it, and you know I am much stronger since I took to eating Mother Segul's Syrup."

"I know my love" said Mrs. Langton, 'I will speak to your father about it, and in the meantime pour me out another cup of tea please."

Beatrice caught hold of the teapot smiling happily as she did so; her father was not the man to say no, and what he said her mother seldom differed from; so she cut her bread and carved her bacon singing a merry song through it all. After breakfast Beatrice dusted the room, got the children ready for school, and then adjusting a straw hat upon her golden tresses she prepared herself for a saunter through the beautiful fields fresh with the smell of new mown hay and Alderny cows. She gathered flowers as she went and though she felt bright and happy by the news the post had brought there was a sore corner in her heart—she had quarrelled with Lawrence Cathcart, and there was not a man in Senbury Glen who did not know his temper! As she strolled along she caught sight of Mr. Langton who was discussing the subject of Welsh sheep with a tradesman. He saw Beatrice and walked towards her.

"Well Bia," he cried, "looking at my cows? aren't they lovely?"

"Beautiful Father," cried Beatrice, "but do you know Mrs. Vindsor wants me to go to Paris and spend the winter with her family, and may I go?"

"Yes certainly," said Mr. Langton, "and I suppose that means you would like a pound or two to buy dresses and hats?"

Beatrice bit her lip and smiled, "I suppose so father," she said gazing placidly at her worn elbows.

"Very well," said her father, "I will give you £10, I should advice a blue serge dress and a yellow hat."

"Oh no father!" shrieked Beatrice, "I will get a green dress and a hat trimmed with roses."

"Very well," said Mr Langton kicking the hay with his feet "do as you please my dear, by the bye when are you expected in Paris?"

"Tomorrow week father," said Beatrice, "at least so Mother says."

Mr Langton whistled and then turning to his daughter he said, "I tell you what Bia, you had better call at the dressmaker on your way home, I hate a bustle at the last moment." so saying Mr Langton gave his daughter £10 in ready gold! Beatrice took them home and put them in her purse till the afternoon when she paid a long visit to the dressmaker. She invested in a lovely green silk dress trimmed with a delicate shade of rose pink, and the

dainty little hat was of the same picturesque colours. She likewise bought a costly diamond brooch and two silver bangles to make up the £10.

On coming out of the shop she turned on to the moors for a last walk before going to Paris, for there would be plenty to do at home such as darning stockings, mending clothes, etc: She called for Nelly Reeves (a friend of hers) ; it would be a good chance to outdo her thought Beatrice, for Nelly had been to Italy the year before and did nothing but boast of it all day. So the two girls arm in arm started for the moors. Nelly Reeves was a tall good looking girl, slightly pretty, but with none of the wistful beauty about her that was so clearly stamped on all Beatrice Langton's features. She had black hair and what she considered beautiful eyes, though they really were small and vacant in their perpetual stare.

"Well I hope you will enjoy yourself" she remarked briskly when Beatrice told her of the invitation to Paris.

"I am sure I shall," said Beatrice, gently feeling her hair behind, "only think of the delights of it! The Vindsors live in a Chateau you know!"

"Yes, I suppose it will be jolly for you," said Nelly "who are the Vindsors?"

"Oh dont you remember Clara Vindsor?" said Beatrice, "she was so very pretty and polite in her ways."

"I recollect her," said Nelly gazing on the far away blue hills, "oh Beatrice how lovely that view is!"

"Yes," said Beatrice sadly, "I came up here last night for a walk."

"Alone?" asked Nelly.

Beatrice wished she had not spoken then, but being frank and straightforward she replied "no I was not alone."

"Who with?" enquired Nelly.

"Never mind," retorted Beatrice.

"Oh Beatrice do tell me" coaxed Nelly, I'll not tell a soul."

"I dont care if you do," said Beatrice coldly.

"Well let me see if I can guess" said Nelly artfully "was it Mr Cathcart?"

"What makes you guess him?" asked Beatrice angrily.

"Why because he has been paying attentions to you lately, and I thought he might have come up here to propose" said Nelly.

"You have most silly ideas!" retorted Bea-

trice, "if you dont leave off please to go home, what if he did propose?"

"Oh nothing at all," replied Nelly, "if you are so disagreeable I *will* go home," so saying Miss Reeves tucked up her dress and walked home.

"Life is hard!" sighed Beatrice, "nothing seems to go right, first I quarrel with Lawrence and then with Nelly—why what is that?" she cried as she caught sight of something gold glittering in the pathway.

She stooped to pick it up; it was a gentleman's gold link, beautifully carved and engraved with the initials L. C.

"L. C." repeated Beatrice handling the link pensively "why they are his initials, can it be his I wonder? why yes" she continued, "here is the name Lawrence Cathcart; His Links! yes they are his, I will keep them and I may some day have occasion to return them to him," so saying she put the articles in her leather purse and turned towards home.

In som unaccountable way Beatrice turned into the High Street and had to pass Lawrence Cathcart's house, a splendid white stone building standing apart from the other houses in a beautiful garden of well tended blooms.

"What riches!" sighed Beatrice pausing at the iron gates, and as her blue eyes searched the lovely grounds her glance fell upon Lawrence Cathcart. He was standing under a tree with an open book in his hands. He wore a light fawn suit and his black curly hair was exposed to the Autumn sun; and as Beatrice gazed on this good looking young man she wondered why she had not noticed before how exquisitely curly his hair and moustache was, how fine his nose and eyes, and how beautifully his mouth was curved.

But she did not talk to him or try to attract his attention, and sad and disheartened she walked home.

CHAPTER 4

Tea was ready when Beatrice returned home and she drew in her chair and clustered round the table.

"Well, what is your dress like?" asked Mrs Langton as she passed the butter to her husband.

"Oh it is lovely Mother" answered Beatrice,

"and oh Father" she continued, "I bought some jewellry too!"

"Jewellry" cried Mr. Langton stirring his tea very hard, "with my money?"

"Well yes father," sighed Beatrice, "I hope you are not angry?"

"What did you buy" enquired Mr Langton.

"Two bracelets and a brooch" said Beatrice sadly.

Mr. Langton coughed and helped himself to some strawberry jam.

"I have been very busy putting some embroidery on your white petticoat all the afternoon," said Mrs Langton trying to change the subject, "you know I had a telegram to say you are expected on Thursday instead of next week."

"Oh Mother" said Beatrice, "I must begin to pack at once!" so saying she flew up to her bedroom, and ten minutes later the floor was littered with as many articles of clothing as you could wish to see, and when Mrs Langton came up after tea she found her daughter seated on the bed amid stockings of every shade, curling some crimson feathers.

"My dear Beatrice!" cried that good lady in astonishment, "what are you doing?"

"Well I was trying to pack mother" answered Beatrice calmly.

"I see" said Mrs Langton folding up a blue skirt as she spoke, "if you will allow me to help you I think you will manage better."

"Very well," replied Beatrice, "there are the trunks."

"Yes I see them" said Mrs Langton, "I think your new dress and hat had better go in the basket trunk dont you?"

"Perhaps so" said Beatrice gathering the stockings off the bed, "Oh mother, to think that the day after tomorrow I shall be going to Paris!"

"Yes indeed dear" replied Mrs Langton glancing round the littered room, "you have plenty of work to do, just darn these stockings will you, while I collect your hats."

Beatrice threaded her needle and once she was seated in the big arm-chair, her busy tongue began to go.

"What time do you suppose I shall arrive at Paris mother?" was the first question.

"Let me see, the boat starts from Newhaven at 11 in the morning," said Mrs Langton slowly, "I think you get to Paris about ten in the evening though I wont be sure."

"How nice!" said Beatrice, "is the Vindsor's house very grand?"

"I believe so" replied her mother "at least they keep fifty servants and nearly everything is either gold or silver!"

"Gracious!" exclaimed Beatrice.

"Yes," said Mrs Langton, "now Beatrice bring that darning downstairs, we must finish packing tomorrow, I will mend that skirt for you," and so saying Mrs Langton left the room.

CHAPTER 5

At last the eventful day came and found Beatrice up at six o'clock, putting the last articles in her hand bag. By eight o'clock she was at the station taking the last farewells.

The little ones crowded round her, giving her chocolate and various sweets to eat on the way. Mrs Langton sobbed copiously, and Mr Langton as he kissed his daughter pressed a sovereign into her hand. But at last the guard waved his flag, the porters slammed the doors, and Beatrice found herself spinning away through fields of every shade, fast leaving Sen-

bury Glen behind and approaching Newhaven Harbour. Beatrice gave a little sigh half of joy and half of fear, and then subsided into her novel and refreshments till the train stopped and she found herself in the aforesaid harbour. There were a great many passengers going by the Dieppe boat, and Beatrice had some difficulty to declare her luggage and smuggle the packet of coffee her thoughtful mother had put in the sponge bag. But at last she got on the boat and once she was seated in her deck chair gazing on the rough sea, she could not help shedding a few tears as she thought of the little brown cottage standing alone on the outskirts of Senbury Glen. But she soon cheered up and asked the stewardess to show her to her cabin. The woman obeyed and walked along the deck till she came to a battered looking door, which she opened saying—"Here is your cabin miss, your berth is number 10 and you will find some water to wash in."

Beatrice thanked her and entered the room. A woman five children and a nurse were seated round the room. The nurse had two small babies on her knee which she was trying to hush to sleep in vain. The mother was at-

tempting to comb the hair of a very frantic little boy and scolding two girls who would insist on unfastening all the trunks and scattering the contents on the floor. Beatrice took no notice of the noisy party, but went to her corner of the cabin and did her hair and washed her face in some hard salt water. The stewardess then brought her some tea and a bit of cake and Beatrice took the opportunity to ask her if she was to share the same cabin as the children and their elders.

"Well," whispered the stewardess, "I'm sorry to say you must, but I expect they will go on deck soon and then you will be alright miss."

Beatrice smiled and tried to read her book amidst the deafening roars of the babies. But in a little while the nurse marched them all up on deck, and the mother soon followed with one fat baby and a basket of refreshments in her arms. Then there was peace and Beatrice quite enjoyed her little dinner of ham sandwiches and a cold custard. But about 2 o'clock she began to feel drowsy and enjoyed a pleasant sleep, and at the end of half an hour was surprised to find she was in Dieppe.

She gathered her luggage together and a

good natured sailor helped her off the steamer. She again declared her luggage and went to the station where she awaited the arrival of the train to Paris. At last it came up, and Beatrice found a comfortable carriage well padded with cushions and rugs, and a fat sulky looking girl in one corner who was busily engaged sucking lemons and studying Bradshaw.

CHAPTER 6

It was close on ten when the train stopped at Paris, and Beatrice and the fat girl alighted to the platform.

"Do you reside here?" asked the girl in broken English.

"I am here on a visit," replied Beatrice.

"I see; is it not cold mademoiselle?" said this friendly girl.

"Very," answered Beatrice buttoning the collar of her coat.

"Yes very," continued the girl, "ah Mademoiselle you have no wraps; take my shawl," and without another word the girl pulled off her shawl and flung it round the shoulders of the astonished Beatrice, and then disappeared

into the refreshment room from which she did not reappear again in a hurry. Beatrice was too astonished to speak and hardly liked the coarse woollen shawl which had been so hospitably flung on to her shoulders.

Just as she had with some difficulty found her luggage a very grand footman dressed in green plush came up, and touching his hat said "Pour le Chateau?"

Beatrice said "Oui" in a very vague manner, and soon found herself rumbling along the streets of Paris in a very comfortable carriage with her luggage piled round her in a kind of pyramid and the friendly girl's shawl still clinging to her shoulders.

Soon the vehicle reduced speed and all at once Beatrice found herself at the great entrance porch of "Le Chateau!"

The footman rang the bell and then went away leaving Beatrice in a transport of fear and joy on the steps. Soon the door was opened by a very fat butler with powdered hair and a green plush uniform.

"What can I do for you?" he asked with the air of a king.

"Oh please I have come to stay" said Beatrice nervously.

"Step inside," said the courtly butler.

Beatrice did as she was bid and found herself in a most magnificent hall hung with rich velvet curtains and paved with Turkish carpets, and supported by gold and silver pillars.

"What name?" enquired the butler.

"Miss Langton," said Beatrice.

The butler then lead her along costly corridoors and majestic looking passages and at last stopped at a door which he flung open and called in a powerful voice "Miss Langton!"

A murmur arose at this announcement and in less than a minute Beatrice was in Mrs. Vindsor's arms being hugged to death almost. "My dear Beatrice!" she gasped when her kisses were exhausted "how pleased I am to see you! the steak has just gone down to be kept hot, come and see Clara."

These comforting words soothed Beatrice, and then Clara came forward to greet her friend.

Clara was a slight thin girl about 19 with very fair hair and blue eyes, she wore a blue satin dress trimmed with real Brussels lace in keeping with Le Chateau, and a spray of blue flowers in her hair.

"My sisters will be down in one minute"

she said kindly "their maids are doing their hairs."

"Oh I see," said Beatrice rapidly taking off her gloves and displaying with some pride her white smooth hands.

"I suppose you are very tired," said Mrs. Vindsor giving the fire a poke with the toe of her shoe.

"Yes I am," said Beatrice "it was very rough crossing."

Just then the door opened and two girls entered about 22 and 24 in age. The eldest was by no means beautiful but she was intensely good. She had small black eyes and black hair which she wore in a most peculiar manner, it was cut in a fringe in front and gathered into a huge knob behind all except one piece which hung down her back and on the end of which a single red rose was attached. She was attired in yellow silk and was by no means courteous to Beatrice, her name was Honoria.

The other girl was the most beautiful of the three. She had lovely brown hair and soft blue eyes fringed by sweet long lashes. Her nose and mouth were enough to attract an artist towards her; she was dressed in a lovely pink silk dress and her knob was arrayed by

a pink feather. Her name was Margaret and she was known through all Paris as the "sweet young lady with the pathetic blue eyes!" and on the 20th of August (her birthday) not a single person omitted to give her a present. Beatrice thought her lovely and kissed her on both cheeks with hearty good cheer.

And so ended Beatrice's first night at Le Chateau.

CHAPTER 7

THE next morning Beatrice had a slight headache and did not rise till the breakfast gong sounded through the walls of the great castle.

Just as she was ready her bedroom was opened and Margaret appeared.

"Oh Beatrice," she cried, "isn't it a lovely morning? Mama has just had a note asking us all to Mrs. Middle's garden party this afternoon, there will be a lot of English people there just arrived like yourself."

"Yes very nice," said Beatrice and the two went down to breakfast together.

Mrs. Vindsor and Honoria were already seated at the table enjoying the fragrant meal, but Clara had not yet come down.

"How late you are Margaret" protested Mrs. Vindsor.

"I am sorry Mother" said Margaret cracking her egg.

"So I should hope" said Honoria shaking her head so that the rose at the end of her tail swayed to and fro also.

After the meal was over Clara proposed to take Beatrice for a walk in the gay town as Margaret was going to trim a hat for Mrs. Middle's garden party, and Honoria always did the housekeeping.

Beatrice was delighted at the offer and soon joined Clara in the spacious hall.

"We must go this way" said Clara "as I have to go the Bank for Mother."

"Oh alright" said Beatrice taking Clara's arm.

Then followed a little conversation about nothing in particular, and by the time they reached the Bank Beatrice had quite decided that though Clara was very pleasant and cheery she was not as nice as Margaret who was kindness itself to the strange English girl.

"Would you like to walk up and down while I go into the Bank?" asked Clara.

"Yes please," said Beatrice who by no means appreciated Banks, and so saying she left Clara in the office and walked along the gay street. She seemed very strange as she walked through the strange streets and was so taken with the fancy shops that she forgot all about Clara in the bank.

"Dear me! what lovely gloves" she said as she stopped outside a large drapers shop "we dont have such things in England!"

Just then somebody passed behind her and in so doing brushed against her dress. Beatrice at once looked round and there walking quietly in front as though nothing had happened was a man!

Beatrice looked in amazement at the gentleman calmly receding up the road, and as she looked the form seemed to grow familiar in front of her eyes. Surely she had seen that navy blue suit before, that brown hat and those boots! Yes! the very walk was familiar to her. She knew that black curly hair and that well formed back again!—it was Lawrence Cathcart!

Beatrice gave a low cry and covered her face with her hands.

The man looked round and his eyes fell upon

the figure of the unhappy Beatrice. He evidently recognized her for with a little hesitation he advanced towards her and taking her arm said not unkindly—"Come with me."

"I can't" groaned Beatrice.

"You must," said Lawrence.

Beatrice could do no more but slowly and sadly she followed her enemy.

Many thoughts flashed through her mind during that walk, thoughts that Beatrice will never forget.

At last Lawrence stopped at an Inn door and he mounted the steps and walked in. Beatrice followed in silence.

Presently Lawrence opened a door and the two went into a small but pretty bedroom.

"Now," said Lawrence, turning the key in the door and looking kindly at Beatrice, "have you changed your mind since we last met?"

The tears welled into Beatrice's blue eyes and rolled down her now death-like cheeks. "Lawrence," she sobbed at length, "I wish I could say I had, I almost love you Lawrence but I cannot marry you."

"Very well" answered Lawrence drawing his lips tightly together, "I see my journey to France has been made in vain; I may add,"

he continued "that I came here purposely to encounter you but all in vain! You have no real reason for not wishing to become my wife —it is not possible; but I will now flee from you and perhaps when I am laid upon my bed for the last time and Death has siezed me in its jaws you will repent of your past wrongs!!"

"Oh Lawrence!" Beatrice almost screamed in her agony "just one word before you go!"

"Not one," replied Lawrence, and with these words upon his lips he left the unhappy Beatrice in a swoon upon his floor.

Beatrice had given one hoarse scream as she fell to the floor, and it brought a couple of waiters to the room.

"What is it?" asked one.

"A young lady has fainted" said the other "run for the doctor quick."

The next instant there was a regular crowd round Beatrice all intensely interested, and in less time than it takes to tell old Doctor Holden was bending over Beatrice's white rigid face.

"She has had some shock I fear" said he feeling the thin white hand "can anyone in the crowd tell me where this lady lives?"

There was no sound of a reply for the first

few seconds and then came a faint "yes" from the back of the throng.

"Come forward" cried the doctor. A rustling and a murmering of voices ensued and then the figure of a young girl rushed forward. It was Margaret Vindsor who had come out in search of Clara and fearing her to be lost had set out to find her.

"Now" said Dr. Holden giving Margaret a chair, "are you any relation to this young lady, and where does she live?"

"Oh Dr. Holden!" cried Margaret "she is a friend of ours and is on a visit to us—oh what shall I do? Oh poor Beatrice!!"

"Why Miss Vindsor is it you?" Asked Dr. Holden in surprise "Waiter run for a cab, we must take these ladies back to Le Chateau."

It was not long before the cab stopped at the Inn door and Dr. Holden assisted by two waiters lifted Beatrice into the cab and laid her gingerly on the seat, while Margaret speedily followed, and then the doctor himself jumped in and the downcast party drove back to Le Chateau.

CHAPTER 8

Mrs. Vindsor together with Honoria and Clara were waiting breathlessly in the hall when the cab drove up. Honoria flew to the door and the minute she caught sight of the unconscious Beatrice and her sister's pale face she gave a loud scream and tore rapidly to her bedroom. Beatrice was carried to her bedroom at once and the doctor soon left after leaving his directions.

Margaret was in a great state of anxiety, but possessing more self control than the rest of the family she was appointed nurse. Beatrice with the aid of salts and mustard plasters soon came to herself, but Lawrence Cathcart had done his work—rheumatic fever set in and for many days Beatrice hung between life and death. Mr. and Mrs. Langton were sent for and duly arrived but to no one would Beatrice confide the mystery of her illness. The more she thought of it the more ill she became and Honoria prayed a good deal. By the time she was able to get up her mind was made up. She would look for Lawrence Cath-

cart, ask his pardon and become his wife. Life offered naught else.

CHAPTER 9

TEN years have passed since the events recorded in my last chapter took place, and Beatrice now a woman of 28, is fair and blooming as ever but with an anxious care-worn expression round her face. She no longer lives in the pretty cottage in Senbury Glen for Mr. Langton has lost a great deal of money farming, and he and his family have changed their quarters and live in a dingy little house in a London back street. It would take too long to relate all that has happened in the last years, so I will describe the events as briefly as possible. To begin with little Tina who was always a delicate child has died within the last four years and rests in the churchyard at Senbury Glen. Mary and Lily have had to leave school early and Mary, a girl of twenty is taking lessons in painting while Lily stays at home.

One thing I must not omit to mention is that Beatrice is still on the look out for Lawrence

Cathcart but fears she will never find him.

One Spring morning Beatrice comes down to breakfast and finds Mrs. Langton busy with some papers.

"Well mother" she says sadly for her merry tone has completely deserted her, "have you heard of anything I can do to earn my living?"

"Yes dear I think so" replies Mrs. Langton glancing nervously at the manuscript in her hand, "you were always fond of nursing were you not Beatrice?"

"Yes mother, ever since I had that illness" answeres Beatrice "it was poor Margaret Vindsor who put the idea in my head."

"Poor Margaret" says Mrs. Langton, for Margaret may be numbered among the dead.

"Well mother what about me?" asks Beatrice presently.

"Oh I was forgetting" answers Mrs. Langton "I have heard from Captain Harsh and he says if I care to let you go to India he has a capital place for you as a military hospital nurse."

"To attend to the soldiers wounded in battle?" asks Beatrice.

"Yes dear" replies Mrs. Langton, "I will read you the letter—"Madam; Hearing of

your daughter's wish to become a hospital nurse, I beg to offer my services. If you do not object to soldiers I have a lovely place out here in India where her only work will be to attend to the soldiers in their bungalows either in the night or day as her turn comes round. She will live with the other nurses in a comfortable house not far from the battle field. She will be expected to bring her own clothes, cups, plates and knives etc: She must be cheerful and kind and must make herself obliging to the soldiers. I will expect her by the next mail.

Believe me, Madam,
Yours very sincerely,
GEORGE HARSH (Captain of the
109th Regiment.)

"That sounds very nice mother" answers Beatrice "I think I will go."

"What about the character you are expected to have?" says Mrs. Langton artfully.

"I think I am both cheerful and kind" says Beatrice hotly "and as to being obliging to the soldiers, anybody could do that."

"Perhaps so," smiles Mrs. Langton, "then I

will write to Captain Harsh and say you will go by the next mail."

For many days after this Beatrice is busy preparing for the voyage. And at last the eventful day arrives and Beatrice clad for the first time in her nurse's costume steps on board the Victory which is to take her to the wonderful city of Calcutta.

"Poor Mr. Langton gets quite frantic as he waves his red pocket handkerchief wildly to his beloved daughter for the last time, and Mrs. Langton faints on the pier and has to be carried away, which sets the helpless Beatrice sobbing as though her heart would break and she shouts messages till she is hoarse and then sheds many tears which continue on and off till she reaches Calcutta, when the sight of two pleasant nurses dressed like herself, quite cheers her up.

She advances bashfully towards them and says in meek submissive tones "if you please are you military hospital nurses?"

"We are," replies the tallest of the two "our names are Nurse Elsie and Nurse Brandon; of course there is no need to say that I am Nurse Brandon."

"Of course not" say Beatrice.

"And you are Nurse Mildred I presume" asks Nurse Brandon, gently nudging Nurse Elsie to join in the conversation.

"No my name is Beatrice Langton" replies Beatrice.

"I know" says Nurse Brandon, "but you will be known as Nurse Mildred in the wards."

"Oh I see" answers Beatrice glancing at Nurse Elsie whom she thinks she will like better than the former.

"And now" says Nurse Brandon "we will take you to the Residency; Nurse Elsie kindly lead the way."

The nurse does as she is told and the three walk on together. At last they reach a large building of yellow brick with a placcard on the door on which is engraved "Nurses' Residence." Nurse Elsie opens the door and leads the way to a large airy room in which some dozen nurses are having tea.

"This is Nurse Mildred," announces Nurse Brandon in loud tones, and then seating herself at the table she continues "Nurse Mildred you will sit next Nurse Helen tonight."

Beatrice gazes vaguely round the room wondering which is Nurse Helen, when suddenly a pretty nurse with chestnut hair and blue

eyes jumps up and announces that she is Nurse Helen and takes Beatrice to her place. The tea is good and there is plenty of it, and together with thick bread and butter and coffee if preferred to tea, Beatrice thinks it is not a bad meal. After tea Nurse Brandon shows Beatrice to her room and tells her she need not begin work till to-morrow.

CHAPTER 10

THE time speeds rapidly on and Beatrice is now counted as quite an old nurse. She finds her work in the bungalows very pleasant and the soldiers find her most obliging. She works hard and is never tempted to grumble.

One day just as she is settling down to write after tea, after a hard day's work, Nurse Helen looks in at the door. "Nurse Mildred," she exclaims "you are to go at once to Bungalow number 5; a wounded soldier has just been taken there and is very ill I fear."

Beatrice jumps up and putting on her bonnet walks quickly to the 5th bungalow. It is a little white one on the outskirts of the jungle and close to the battle field, and in it

there is a bed, two chairs, a jug, basin and table. Beatrice takes hold of a small cup and measures some ointment into it, and then taking a sponge bathes the man's wounds. He is a very thin man with long slender hands and black hair and eyes, and at a first glance Beatrice sees that he is on the point of death. She does all she can for him and then at his wish reads some Holy Scriptures to him. Then seeing his eyes droop she goes to the other end of the bungalow and waits.

Presently she hears a weak voice say "Beatrice!"

She starts, it is a long time since that name has fallen on her ears. "Beatrice, dont you know me?" says the voice once more.

In a minute Beatrice is at his side clasping his hand in hers. "Oh Lawrence, Lawrence!" she cries.

Then there is silence. "Lawrence can you ever forgive me?" moans Beatrice at last.

"Forgive you my darling? It is the one thing I have lived for" says Lawrence.

"Accept me as your lawful wife," cries Beatrice bending over him.

"Yes darling, yes," says Lawrence faintly. He then tells her in a few words how in de-

spair he had given up everything and gone into the Army and lived only long enough to forgive Beatrice, for that day he had received his death wound in a sharp battle with the enemy.

"And now," he adds, "I shall die happy, and will you remember in after years (for I shall not live to) how here it was our hearts were re-united—once more joined together, here it was I accepted you for my wife, and here it is therefore that Love lies Deepest!"

"Oh my dear!" groans Beatrice heavily, "Lawrence, here is what I was going to have given you at the French Inn," and she presses a pair of gold links into his dying hand.

He smiles back at her and says "keep them darling as a remembrance of me."

Beatrice's only answer is a wild kiss, the last Lawrence will ever receive, the memory of which follows him to Eternity, the next minute he falls back with a groan.

Beatrice stands for a rigid moment and then falls prone beside the bed.

And there is only one in all this wide world who knows for certain if Lawrence Cathcart died a happy death.

THE END

THE HANGMAN'S DAUGHTER

THE HANGMAN'S DAUGHTER

PART I

CHAPTER 1

PROLOGUE

JOHN WINSTON had entered into manhood with every prospect of a bright and brilliant future.

His parents had died leaving him a nice little legacy and a great deal of land for farming But with all this good fortune, things did not seem to go right with him.

To begin with, he was idle and did not care for farming, so he let land waste away till it was good for nothing, and was forced to sell it. He then encountered a severe loss of money, and by degrees sank lower and lower in the world till he at last found himself a penniless man with barely enough to keep a roof over his head.

His only resourse then was marriage. There were plenty of rich girls about whose parents would be glad to find a suitable husband for them. John Winston was suitable enough, for he was good looking, witty, and had a certain amount of good sense; but his kind heart would not allow him to fall in love with these girls merely on account of their riches, so had to look out for someone he really loved.

During these explorations he met Helen Carline, a young girl, poor, and with no relations in the world. She was wondrously pretty with a profusion of fluffy golden hair and sad blue eyes which spoke all their thoughts.

Of course John Winston fell in love with her at once and proposed accordingly. After a little hesitation she accepted and John Winston's joy was beautiful to witness.

The married couple took a little cottage on the outskirts of the Malvern Hills and engaged one servant Jane Marshland, by name, about whom we shall hear more later on.

In the spring of the following year a little girl was born as a crowning joy to the young husband and wife.

But three months afterwards Mrs. Winston died of fever, which she caught when visiting a gipsy encampment near her home. So at an early age, little Helen, (for that was the child's name) was left without a mother, but she lacked no love or tenderness, for Mr. Winston's only care was for his beloved child, and Jane Marshland now the nurse, did every thing she could for the child's health and comfort.

Mr. Winston had to give up his dear little home, and retire with Jane and his baby to lodgings in London till he heard of some employment.

At last he found something not very satisfactory, but as nothing else offered he decided to take it. It was to perform the office of hangman in a small country town in Hants by the name of Kenalham.

It was not a nice position to be in certainly, and Mr. Winston's nerves were not strong, but the payment was good, and after all only about two people were hung a year at Kenalham.

So with a sinking heart Mr. Winston packed up his goods and departed with his child and servant to the little cottage in Kenalham, already furnished for him. It was a nice little

house and Mr. Winston smiled as he entered the drawing room, "after all" he said to Jane, "so few people are hung here that nearly all my time will be devoted to my darling Helen," and he kissed the rosy face of the child.

So, now having explained the position of my story I will skip over a few years and go on again at the time when Helen had grown up into a charming sweet mannered girl.

CHAPTER 2

THE COTTAGE BY THE HILL

THE little village of Kenalham was situated in the south of Hants and lay at the bottom of some picturesquely grouped hills.

No river watered the little town, but a broad stream wound through the neighbouring medows giving a rich green shade to the grass on its banks; the high green hills stood out clear and tall against the blue sky, and the ruins of an old castle on the top of one of the heights gave a strange weird appearance. To add to the strangeness of this little scene, at the bottom of the very hill on which the ruins stood was a villa of the modern kind nestling

amidst a woody dell of beach trees. This was no other than the residence of Mr. John Winston and his daughter Helen, and it went by the name of "Beach Dale."

It was a charming little house and had the preveleage of possessing a beautiful view both back and front. The front looked out across miles of woodland scenery with no sign of human inhabetance any where safe a single cottage which stood out like a white speck among the greenness which surrounded it.

The back looked out on the lovely blue hills, and far away in the distant loomed the white cliffs of Portsmouth.

Having now given the reader a correct idea of the surroundings of "Beach Dale" I will endevour to describe Helen Winston.

At the time my story opens, our heroine was a charming young lady of nineteen years. She had an abundance of dark brown, almost black hair, curling gracefully over her forehead. Her beautiful brown eyes were headed by well marked eye brows of a lovely black; her complexion was like that of a blush rose and her pretty little nose and mouth added to the charm of her features.

Here character I will leave to be found out

and only say that she was passionately fond of her father and devoted all her life solely to him.

Trouble and care had made Mr. Winston look old before his time. He was only 54, yet his hair and beard were completely grey. He had a kind quiet face and blue eyes, he had a rather wide mouth with a nervous twitch at each corner. He fully returned his daughter's love and considering he had taught her entirely himself she was comparatively cleaver girl.

CHAPTER 3

THE SECRET SAFE

DURING all the years Mr. Winston had lived in Kenalham he had only made one friend a Mr. Cyril Sheen. He was thirty years of age and a bachelor. He too had no friends in the village but Mr. Winston, so he was constantly at "Beach Dale." He was very fond of Helen and had often attempted to make love to her, but she was so completely innocent of his intentions that he felt quite bashful and dare not begin.

One morning, early in May, Mr. Winston and his daughter were just finishing their breakfast when Marshland came in with a letter which she handed to her master.

"A letter?" said Mr. Winston opening his eyes, "who can it be from?"

"Business, father I'm sure" replied Helen with a smile.

"I think not" said Mr. Winston wisely and he proceeded to tear open the envelope and persue its contents.

As he read the letter his face became first thoughtful, then puzzled and then it broke into a smile and lastly Mr. Winston burst into a fit of laughter and took a sip of his untasted tea. He then turned to his daughter for the first time.

"Do you know who this is from, Helen?" he said.

"No father I don't" answered Helen.

"Perhaps it will need a little explanation" replied Mr. Winston. "You have heard me speak of your cousins the Lincarrols haven't you?"

"Oh yes I know" said Helen "they are very rich aren't they?"

"Yes" said Mr. Winston slowly, "very."

"Well father what about them?" said Helen.

"Did I ever mention Gladys to you," enquired Mr. Winston.

"Oh yes" said Helen, "she is the pretty one isn't she?"

"Yes she is quite the "flower of the flock" I belive" replied Mr. Winston; "the others are decidedly plain."

"Well what about Gladys?" enquired Helen.

"Well she is going to be married shortly, and so she proposes coming here next week for a little while and bring her future husband with her. What do you say to that?" asked Mr. Winston.

Helen's pretty face was beaming with novelty and pleasure.

"How lovely father" she gasped; I do hope she will be nice."

"What about a bedroom for her?" said Mr. Winston.

"Oh! there's the little attic in the loft" replied Helen. "I'm sure that is good enough."

"What about the furniture for it? at present it is completely bare and full of cobwebs," said Mr. Winston.

"I forgot about that," said Helen. "Well she can Have the best bedroom."

"Yes" said Mr. Winston "but where is the young man to go?"

"What young man?" said Helen.

"James Palsey" said Mr. Winston referring to the letter in his hand.

Helen's face fell and her eyes filled with tears. "I'm afraid father" she said "we shall have to refuse them, for if the attic has to be used I certainly have no money to furnish it with and I know you have not."

"Don't make too sure my lass" said her father, "wait a little."

He got up as he spoke and taking a small key from his pocket went towards the left hand corner of the mantlepiece.

"Come closer Helen, come closer," he said keeping his eyes on his daughter.

Helen followed her father closely, her eyes with a startled expression in them and her lips quivering with emotion. Mr. Winston lifted a portion of the red velvit curtain which screaned the fire place, and then to Helen said:

"Do you notice anything peculiar about this part of the wall, my child."

"No father, except that there is a little hole just in the middle," replied Helen.

"Ah! you notice that?" said Mr. Winston.

"Yes" said Helen under her breath.

"Now watch me" said Mr. Winston.

Helen needed no second bidding; her eyes seemed riveted to the little hole.

Mr. Winston placed the key into the hole and turned it twice round. Immeadiately a little spring door flew open displaying two well constructed shelves of solid oak.

"This is my secret safe," said Mr. Winston, "known to no one but myself."

"Father!" cried Helen catching hold of his arm.

"Don't get excited, Helen" said her father. "I am going to disclose all the secrets of this safe to you. Do you perceive that the top shelf is faced in by a thin wire gauze with a handle to the left hand side?"

"Yes father" replied Helen.

"Well, nobody can get at the contents of that shelf without my knowing it."

"Why father?" asked Helen.

"Because there are two ways of opening it. Try to open it yourself and then I will explain it to you" said Mr. Winston.

Helen with nervous fingers took hold of the handle and turned it; the gauze door flew open and at the same time a bell began to ring loud and furiously.

Helen drew back in amazement.

Cant Marshland hear it. "Why doesn't she come up" asked Helen.

"She would not trouble to come up for she knows my secret" said Mr. Winston.

"Oh! I see" said Helen.

"Well to proceed" said Mr. Winston. "If Marshland or I heard that bell we should know the safe was being robbed and come up at once."

"Of course" said Helen.

"But there is another way of opening the safe known only to me" said Mr. Winston closing the gauze door; try any way you like to open that door I don't think you will find the right way."

Helen pushed and banged at the door trying every way, but in vain, the door would not move.

"Now I will show the right way," said Mr. Winston, as he spoke he placed his thumb on a brass nail and the gauze door rose instead of opening, and without any noise displayed the contents of the secret safe.

"How wonderfull" said Helen.

"Would you like to see the contents?" said Mr. Winston.

"Oh! yes father" replied Helen.

Mr. Winston put his hand on the shelf and brought out a leather bag.

"It is full of gold" he said weighing it in his hand, "the savings of a life time."

"Oh father" gasped Helen.

Mr. Winston took out 10 gold peices and the rest he left in the bag "this will pay for the furnishing of the attic" he said.

"So it will" said Helen brightly.

Mr. Winston put the bag back and took out a little ivory box and displayed some magnificent jewilery to his daughter's dazzled eyes, "this was all all left to you by your mother's will," he said.

"Really!" said Helen, "I can't belive it."

The jewils consisted of two broachs, one set entirely in diamonds, the other a horseshow set in rubies; a gold watch, chain and seals; a nexlet of pearls and a gold bracelet fastenned with a ruby heart.

Mr. Winston placed the bracelet on Helen's slender arm; "this" he said "was to be given you in your nineteenth year, the other jewils

by your mother's will will be given to you when you come of age.

"How lovely" cried Helen glancing at the circlet of gold on her wrist.

"I will now lock up the rest of the things" said Mr. Winston "and mind Helen, not a word of this is ever to be revealed."

"Never father" said Helen kissing him.

Mr. Winston had barely shut the safe and closed the curtain when the door opened and in came Cyril Sheene.

"Good morning Winston" he cried hastily, "I thought I'd just pop in and see if Helen would come out with me."

"Why Cyril we didn't expect you half so early" said Helen blushing.

"No I'm sure you didn't replied Cyril, "but you will come out wont you?"

"Oh certainly" said Helen and she ran up to get her hat.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROPOSAL

CYRIL SHEENE, as I have already said was thirty years of age and a bachelor.

He was short and fat and had fair sleek hair parted in the middle, mild blue eyes and a silly sort of expression all over his face.

In ten minutes Helen came down again in a neatly fitting grey jacket and a large straw hat with a few scarlet poppies trailing over the brim. She looked very pretty and Cyril's face shone with pleasure as he regarded her.

"Wont you come out father?" asked Helen, "I suppose we are going on the hills are'nt we Cyril?"

"I thought we might go and sit by the old castle, it is such a glorious day" responded Cyril.

"Do come father" said Helen.

"I don't think I can" said Mr. Winston "I must go to the town this morning"

"Very well" said Helen; and then while Cyril Sheene was looking for his stick, she seized an opportunity to ask her father "shall I tell Cyril about Gladys coming?" "Yes" replied Mr. Winston "but mind not a word about the safe." "Oh no" answered Helen, and then with a lively little jump she ran after Cyril who was already walking down the garden path.

It was a perfect morning, the sun shone

brightly, lighting up all the scenery around; the birds were singing in the beach trees close by and the rippling of the little stream was as sweet music to the ear.

"Do you know Helen, I had an engagement in London today, but I put it off to come out with you" said Cyril, as they commenced to climb the hill.

"Oh indeed!" replied Helen "that was very kind of you."

"Oh no" answered Cyril "I would far rather be out here than in London."

"I quite agree with you there" said Helen "it would be horrid to be in smoky London today."

"Yes" said Cyril "especially without you."

"Oh rubbish" laughed Helen and she stooped down to pick a buttercup.

"Indeed it is not rubbish" replied Cyril "when a man loves, he finds it hard to be away from the object of his love."

"Oh does he?" said Helen "but then I am not the object of your love."

"Yes you are Helen," said Cyril, making an attempt to squeaze her hand.

"My dear boy" said Helen, "I do wish you would not talk such nonsense."

"Excuse me" answered Cyril, getting rather red "I am a man."

"Are you really?" said Helen carelessly.

"Now look here Helen, don't be aggrivating" said the lover "you know quite well I love you and why I have come up here."

They had reached the castle now and sat down by the ruined walls.

"Why have I come up here?" asked Cyril again.

"I suppose because it is more breezy than the town" replied Helen.

"Don't be silly Helen" said Cyril pulling up a tuft of grass.

"I am not the least silly" said Helen smiling beneath her handkerchief.

"No of course you're not darling" cried Cyril putting his arm round her waist.

"You mustn't call me "darling" Cyril" replied the girl shyly.

"Yes I must" said Cyril getting a little closer.

"Oh well for once in a way perhaps it does'nt matter" said Helen.

"Well the long and the short of it is Helen" said Cyril "I want to marry you?

"Really" said Helen "you've been long enough getting to the point."

"Have I?" said Cyril shyly "well now that I have come to it, do you love me enough to marry me?"

"Ye-es" replied Helen slowly.

"You seem rather doubtful" said Cyril.

"It's best to be so at first" replied Helen.

"Not in my case surely" answered Cyril, "oh Helen do say yes and make me a happy man."

"Yes" murmered Helen softly.

"Oh you angel" gasped Cyril "do you really mean it?"

"Of course I do" said Helen, "and I *do* love you Cyril."

"Thank you so much" said Cyril "well now let's hurry home and ask your father I'm in such a terrific hurry."

"Don't be absurd" said Helen "I want to stay in the sunshine."

"Anything to please you dear" said Cyril reseating himself on the grass.

"Cyril, I think you'll make a model husband" said Helen.

"I'm sure I will" laughed Cyril and with that they got up to walk home.

At the bottom of the hill they spied Mr.

Winston. He looked up as he saw them coming and waved his hand furiously.

When they met Mr. Winston he turned directly to Helen, "what do you think Helen, I've furnished the attic all by myself, the only thing Marshland did was to scrub the floor and nail up the curtains."

"How nice" said Helen "but father I've something far more important to tell you."

"Dont say it my child" said the old man "your faces tell me what it is and I give my consent on the spot."

And he plunged his stick into the ground to mark the vehemance of his words.

CHAPTER 5

GLADYS LINCARROL

THE week that followed that day was a happy one indeed. Helen and Cyril were more together than ever and then too each day brought it nearer to when Gladys was to come.

At last Monday morning came, and Helen was so excited she could hardly eat her dinner, and Mr. Winston got quite cross when

she refused some beautiful cherry pie.

"Do hurry up father" exclaimed Helen at last, "I want to have the room nice and tidy for Gladys and Mr. Palsey."

"My dear I wont starve for any amount of grand ladies" replied Mr. Winston heartily.

Helen smiled languidly and began to arrange the flower stand by the window.

At 4 o'clock precisely a dainty little dog cart drew up at Beach Dale. Helen, peeping from behind the drawing room curtains, saw, first a tall man dressed in a blue suit and black hat and gloves, jump down from the cart and hold out his hand to a young lady who tripped lightly down and tossed a silver coin to the coachman.

The next moment the drawing room door was flung open and Marshland's clear voice was heard announcing, "Miss Lincarrol—Mr. Palsey."

"Oh dear Gladys, I am so delighted to see you" cried Helen in her sweetest tones.

"And I am equally glad to meet you" cried Gladys, "and allow me to introduce my future husband James Palsey."

"How do you do" said Mr. Palsey gravely as he held out his well gloved hand.

At that minute Mr. Winston entered the room dressed in his best things.

"Well Gladys my dear and how are you he cried cheerfully "what a big person you are to be sure, quite half a head taller than Helen I declare."

Gladys laughed affectedly and held out her small hand; she then introduced Mr. Palsey, who, during all this merriment had stood as grave as a judge.

"Do come and have some food pleaded Helen pointing to the dainty little equipage already set out on a bamboo table by the open window.

"Oh thank you" said Gladys and she began to take off her gloves and turn up her veil preparatory to eating.

"Wont you take a seat Mr. Palsey?" asked Helen as she poured out the tea.

"Thanks" replied the gentleman and he sat down on the edge of a whicker chair. Here will be a good oppertunity to describe Gladys Lincarrol and her young man.

Mr. Palsey was a tall broad shouldered man about 37, with a solemn face and large hands. His black hair was curly and plentiful and his small green eyes twinkled queerly if he was

at all pleased. He was attired in blue, as I said before and in addition to this he wore patent leather boots and a crimson tie.

Gladys was also tall, but very slim. She had golden hair with a reddish tinge and blue eyes. She was very pale and her mouth had a peculiar twitch of conciet. She wore a lovely pink muslin dress and kid gloves to match. A large white hat adorned her pretty head, and she wore a bunch of violets at her neck.

Tea over, Helen proposed a stroll around the village.

"Oh yes, that will be very nice, dont you think so Jim?" asked Gladys.

"Yes I do, thanks" replied Mr. Palsey.

So the trio linked arms and walked slowly down the garden path, and Mr. Winston settled himself comfortably once more and prepared to read the "Star."

CHAPTER 6

A DISSOPOINTING LETTER

He had barely got through the first paragraph when Marshland entered with a letter.

"For you sir" she said placing it on her master's lap.

"Thanks" said Mr. Winston opening the envelope as he spoke.

The letter ran thus:

H. M. Prison,
Warwick.

Dear Sir,

You are requested to come up here by the first train tomorrow morning to hang Mr. Smith, who has lately murdered his wife and three children. It is a serious case, and I am sure you will sympathize.

Belive me dear sir
Yours etc
C. L. Porter (head warder of the county prison).

To. J. Winston Esq: Beach Dale, Kenalham Hants.

Mr. Winston sighed as he closed the letter.

"Oh dear oh dear" he cried, "here I have to leave my happy home, just when Gladys and James have arrived, Marshland" he added.

"Yes sir" said the servant coming forward.

"I shall have to leave home early tomor-

row" said Mr. Winston "how will you get on with out me?"

"Oh sir, I think we shall get on all right" responded Marshland "I'll keep an eye on the young ladies and Mr. Palsey will cheer them up I know."

"I dont know that" said Mr. Winston "he seems a very dull gentleman."

"Do he really sir" said Marshland "well I'm sure I'm very sad."

"But do you think you can mannage without me? I shall not be away more than three days" asked Mr. Winston.

"Oh yes sir, dont you fret" replied Marshland and now is there anything I can do for you?"

"No nothing thank you" said Mr. Winston "but when the young ladies and Mr. Palsey come in, send Miss Helen to me."

"Yes sir" said Marshland quitting the room.

Barely had the door closed on Marshlands comely figure, when it opened again and Cyril Sheene came bounding in.

"Hullo Winston" he cried "I heard you had some friends down, so I thought I'd just drop in and be introduced."

"They're all out at present" said Mr. Win-

ston with a vain attempt at a smile, "sit down wont you they'll be in soon."

Cyril flung himself down in an arm chair and then glanced at Mr. Winston.

"Why Winston old fellow" he cried, you dont look yourself, is anything up?"

"Oh nothing said Mr. Winston tapping the table nervously."

"Now look here" said Cyril "you cant get round me like that, I know something is wrong, you might as well tell me."

"Very well Cyril I'll tell you" said Mr. Winston and he handed the letter to Cyril, who read it carefully through. As he did so a marked change came over his face, a change from a pleasant faced young man to that of a stern, cold, yet pleased person.

"So you're off tomorrow?" remarked he as he folded the paper.

"Yes I suppose so" said Mr. Winston.

"How you must feel leaving the girls all alone" said Cyril.

"I do" said Mr. Winston, "but I know Marshland will take good care of them and you'll look in wont you?"

"Well I was about to suggest going up with you" said Cyril "I know a few friends in War-

wick and you'd be all the better for a companion."

"It is kind of you Cyril" said Mr. Winston "but I'd rather you stopped to take care of Helen."

"Oh Helen will be all right with Marshland and Mr. Palsey in the house" said Cyril "I think you need me more."

"I suppose I do" replied Mr. Winston "but my poor little Helen."

"Well I'll stay if you like, but you wont be away more than three days and what Helen wants with me hanging about I dont know." said Cyril.

"Well I'll take your advice and accept you as a companion, and thanks a thousand times Cyril" replied Mr. Winston.

At that moment the door opened and Helen came running in.

"Well father dear" she said, "I was told you wanted me, so I just came down while Gladys changes her dress."

"Yes dear" said Mr. Winston I am afraid I have some rather bad news for you."

"Oh dear father what is it?" exclaimed Helen kneeling down by the chair.

"I must go to Warwick early to-morrow

dear on a hanging matter" replied Mr. Winston "I shall be back in three days."

"Oh father" cried Helen "just when Gladys and Mr. Palsey have come down Oh I am sorry" and her pretty eyes filled with tears.

"Yes dear I am sorry too" remarked Mr. Winston slowly, "but you'll be all right wont you?"

"Oh yes father" said Helen "I was not thinking of myself, but it always knocks you up so, and just when we're all so happy."

"Well Cyril has offered to go with me and keep me company" said Mr. Winston "you wont miss him much will you?"

"Oh Cyril I am glad" exclaimed Helen. "I feel far easier now, you'll take such care of father I know."

"Yes Helen I will" said Cyril folding Helen in his arms and kissing her forehead.

"Thank you Cyril" said Helen returning her lover's kiss.

Soon after Gladys and Mr. Palsey came in, and a merry farewell evening was spent, Cyril at the head of the fun.

Next morning Helen was up early toasting some bread for her father's breakfast; she

made the table and room as cosy as she could and then waited her fathers coming down.

He came at last looking worn and pale but he enjoyed his meal and cheered up a little as he ate it.

"Now dear, is your portmanteau ready?" enquired Helen trying hard to keep back her tears.

"Yes dear quite" returned the father "and Cyril will meet me at the station you know."

"Yes he told me so" replied Helen.

"Well goodbye darling, keep a good heart and I'll be back on Thursday at the latest" said Mr. Winston.

"Goodbye dear father" rejoined the girl "I'll try and be cheerful but it is hard you know."

"I know it dear" said Mr. Winston and then turning to Marshland he added "goodbye Marshland, take good care of the young ladies and keep an eye on Mr. Palsey."

"I will sir" returned Marshland and then she and Helen stood at the door the latter waving her handkerchief to the dear father who was never more to enter his happy home in Kenalham.

CHAPTER 7

THE ALARM

HELEN WINSTON found it very hard to be merry without her father, but she did her best and Gladys took her little attentions very kindly.

"What do you propose doing now? she asked when breakfast was cleared away.

"I must attend to the housekeeping first and then I thought a walk on the hills would be nice" answered Helen.

"Very good" said Gladys "we can go and visit the old castle you talk so much about."

"Yes" said Helen, and she tripped down stairs, more for the pleasure of a comforting talk with Marshland than to order the dinner.

In an hour's time they were all ready and started on their breezy walk.

"How lovely it is up here," remarked Gladys.

"Yes is'nt it beautiful" replied Helen thinking of the last time she was up there."

The little promenade quite cheered Helen up, and she and Gladys did some shopping in

the afternoon while Mr. Falsey stayed at home to smoke his pipe.

The next day passed pretty much the same as the first and by Thursday morning Helen was all smiles again, knowing that by tea-time her dear father would be home again.

In the afternoon she went out and bought a tea cake for tea. She had tea laid out on the best bamboo table with the blue and gold tea cups and she also put fresh flowers in all the vases and all together the little drawing room had a truly home-like aspect.

At 4 o'clock a ring was heard at the front door.

"How funny of father to ring" cried Helen "I thought he would be sure to come in and supprise me."

"Perhaps he thought it would supprise you more if he rung," replied Gladys.

"Ah perhaps so" responded Helen giving a last touch to the pink rose-buds which drooped prettily over the china vases.

At that moment Marshland entered the room with a frightened look on her face.

Coming up she handed a telegram to Helen "its given me such a turn miss" she explained

"them telegrams always seem to carry bad news."

Helens face grew pale and she hastily opened the envelope.

The moment her eyes rested on the words, she uttered a cry of anguish and flung the telegram away from her. "Oh I know its father" she cried.

"Hush hush miss" said Marshland soothingly and picking up the telegram she too read the fatel words. The telegram ran as follows:

Come at once, a terrible thing has happened. Sheene.

Marshland's honest face grew ashy as she read the words, but she tried to control her feelings for Helens sake.

"Well miss it is a terrible thing" she said "but we can but hope for the best, what train will you go by miss."

"Oh I dont know, dont ask me," cried poor Helen.

"Dont cry so Helen dear" said Gladys "after all it may not be as bad as Mr. Sheene thinks."

"Wont you allow me to come to Warwick

with you Miss Winston?" asked Mr. Palsey kindly.

"You're very kind" sobbed Helen, "but Gladys wont like it."

"Dont think of me for one instant" said Gladys, patting Helen's head "of course you'll go with her James and Marshland and I will keep house till you come back."

"I had better go tonight" said Helen getting up from the sofa and glancing at the pretty little tea table, which five minutes ago she had arranged with such love and care.

"Yes miss, the telegram says at once" replied Marshland, "I wonder when the next train is."

"I can tell you" cried Mr. Palsey producing a time table from his pocket and running his finger down the column.

"Poor Helen" said Gladys kissing her fondly.

"Seven fifteen is the next" said Mr. Palsey, "that'll give you nice time to get ready," and it gets to Warwick at 11-30.

"That will do" replied Helen "will you put my things together for me, I feel so faint."

"Yes dearie" replied Marshland. Now Helen dear you rest on the sofa and I'll bring

you some tea" said Gladys. Helen flung herself down, quite worn out.

Gladys gave her a cup of strong tea and bathed her hot head with eau de cologne.

"I'll go and order the dog-cart, to drive us to the station" said Mr. Palsey.

"Yes be quick James, you must not be late" replied Gladys.

For in an hour's time all was ready. Helen, with a white shawl over her face was standing at the door while Mr. Palsey put the bags into the dog cart.

"Goodbye Helen dear" cried Gladys "keep up a good heart and James will take every care of you."

"Goodbye Gladys" said Helen "and thanks so much for sparing him to me."

"Goodbye Miss Helen my love" cried poor old Marshland wiping her eyes on her apron, "write as soon as you can and let me know how the master is."

"Yes of course I will" cried Helen, jumping into the dog cart, "goodbye all, goodbye and in an other minute the dog cart was out of sight, and Marshland returned to her work, and Gladys to the deserted drawing room.

CHAPTER 8

BAD NEWS

THE journey on which Helen and Mr. Palsey had set out was a very long one indeed and May though it was the night was very chilly.

Helen shivered as she got into the train and drew her shawl round her. Mr. Palsey had taken first class tickets, and so soothing was the motion of the train and so comfortable the seat in which she found herself that Helen soon dropped asleep.

"Now I can think over things a bit," said Mr. Palsey taking some papers from a black bag by his side, "jolly nice of Gladys to suggest me coming up here, though she didn't know why I wanted to come poor girl; odd that I didn't hear from Sheene today, I quite expected a line or a telegram to say how matters stand. It may here be mentioned that Mr. Palsey and Cyril Sheene were by no means new acquaintances and had met many times in London and even once or twice before in Kenalham.

"Odd how Cyril found out about that secret

shelf mused Mr. Palsey "a whole bag of gold he said, how Winston saved it I dont know, ah he was a rich man with all his poor living and scanty furniture. I think there were some jewils in the safe too but of course it is the money, the gold I'm putting myself to this for and with a cold laugh, he drew out some closely written papers and read them eagerly, putting pencil marks by certain paragraphs in the document.

The train flew on nearing Warwick rapidly.

At last Helen awoke with a start and found Mr. Palsey taking forty winks opposite her.

She rubbed her eyes and looked out of the window, "how dark it is" she thought and its raining too, how horrible and she nestled under her fluffy shawl. Presently the train stopped with a jerk and Mr. Palsey woke up.

"This is Warwick" he said picking up his bag "train's late and it is twenty to twelve.

"How late" quoth Helen and with a sigh she followed Mr. Palsey on to the crowded platform.

It was a dreary sight which met the weary girl's eyes. The rain was pouring heavily and the whole station looked wet and miserable. The gas lights flickered in the wind making

hideous shadows on the walls. The porters, cold and cross looking, poor things, were bustling about, crying the name of the station at the tops of their voices, and a thin shaggy dog, evidently lost, was howling pitiably, tending by no means to cheer poor Helen's quaking heart.

"I thought Cyril would be sure to meet you" said Mr. Palsey suddenly "you go into the waiting room and warm yourself and I'll walk up the road a bit and see if I see him, for I dont know what house to go to do you?"

"No" said Helen, "oh Mr. Palsey I'm so unhappy and with a faint cry she turned away and buried her face in her shawl.

"Poor thing" thought Mr. Palsey "she cant guess the worst yet," out loud he added "hush Miss Winston, you are over fatigued, that is all, would you like a cup of coffee? the refreshment room is not yet closed."

"I could'nt drink or eat" replied Helen sadly "I'll go and sit by the fire while you look for Cyril.

"Very well" said Mr. Palsey, and he turned round and went off in an opposite direction.

Helen entered the waiting room and sat by the fire her tired eyes covered with her hands.

Presently she raised her white face and glanced at the clock. Two old ladies sitting near, noticed her pale frightened face.

"Have you come a long journey" asked one "you look very tired."

"I am very tired, and miserable too" broke forth Helen in the fullness of her heart "oh why am I dragged up here in this cruel fashion, oh what has happened to father?" she burst into heart broken sobbing.

The old ladies looked very much alarmed and after bidding Helen a kind good night, gathered up their wraps and departed.

The time sped on and still nether Cyril nor Mr. Palsey arrived.

Helen grew terrified and was on the point of going out on to the platform when the door opened and the two men appeared.

Mr. Palsey looked much the same, Cyril was clad in a heavy ulster and his face was white and scared.

Cyril was speaking as the two entered and Helen caught the last words, "just as we could have wished" he was saying. "Oh Cyril Cyril" cried Helen and she flung herself into his arms.

"My darling" gasped Cyril and a queer gur-

gle sounded in his throat. "What is it Cyril, what has happened?" cried Helen, clutching hold of his coat.

"Hush darling" said Cyril, "come outside.

Helen was quite overcome by now and she allowed herself to be led out by Cyril and Mr. Palsey.

"Shall you tell her tonight" whispered Mr. Palsey.

"It is better to get it over" replied Cyril, "Helen dear, be prepared for bad news."

"Yes yes anything" gasped Helen nervously "father is ill I know very ill, oh Cyril tell me quickly."

"Worse than that" said Cyril and he clasped her tightly to him.

"Not dying moaned Helen, "oh Cyril not dying.

Cyril said nothing, but Mr. Palsey whispered "out with it Sheene, she must know soon."

"He is dead" cried Helen wildly, "say the words Cyril say them."

Cyril bowed his head "yes" he murmured "dead—murd——

"Hush" whispered Mr. Palsey striking him on the arm, "you idiot, keep quiet."

With a shriek, Helen tore herself from Cyril's grasp and ran like the wind, she herself knew not wither; at the station gate her strength failed her, she turned, she tottered, she tried to scream and fell insensible at the feet of the villians.

CHAPTER 9

HELEN'S ACCTIDENT

Cyril and Mr. Palsey lost no time in conveying Helen to a cab which was waiting outside. They placed her on one of the seats and bade the cabman drive directly to number 2 Medina Road, where Cyril was lodging.

"How will you manage about the money Cyril?" presently asked Mr. Palsey.

"Dont speak to me of money?" cried Cyril bitterly, "oh Helen Helen" and he bent over his unconcious sweetheart.

"Pon me word Cyril" cried Mr. Palsey "you're a born idiot, the girl will soon recover, you'll marry her and we'll go halfs with the money, its simply ridiculous the way you mople and mumble over her, let her alone I

say and tell me how the murd—the bussiness went off."

"I've told you twice it was very successful" replied Cyril impatiantly.

"You're trying to hide something I can see" cried Mr. Palsey passionately, "you'd best tell me, or not a farthing of the money shall be yours."

"I dont see that" said Cyril cooly, "you dont even know where the safe is." Mr. Palsey bit his lips in suppressed anger. Cyril's words were stiningly true and made him boil with passion. "Here we are" said Cyril, as the cab stopped at a dimly lighted street corner.

"Hi cabman, get down and open the door" screamed Mr. Palsey.

The man shuffled down from the box and opened the door.

"Any luggage" he asked roughly.

"No" replied Mr. Palsey "there is a young lady fainted and we are going to carry her in to this house."

"Right" responded the man and he stood aside while Cyril and Mr. Palsey came gingerly out carrying Helen between them.

As they were ascending the steps a rough

looking man in a torn red shirt and battered hat came up and addressed himself to Cyril.

"Hi sir" he cried out "what about that £10 you promised; I'm a poor starving man and I cant wait much longer.

"Bother" muttered Cyril "here man will a shilling suffice for this evening, I'll pay the rest tomorrow."

"All right" grumbled the man, "unless you pay up tomorrow it'll be the last job I do for you," and with an oath the man departed.

Cyril lead the way into a dimly lighted parlour and with Mr. Palseys help Helen was soon arranged on the sofa.

Some supper consisting of cold mutton, vegitables and a jug of ale was laid out on a round table in the centre of the room, and small parrifin lamp burnt on the mantleshelf. Going over to this last object Cyril screwed it up, so that its glare fell, full on Helen's face.

"Why she's hurt herself terribly" cried Cyril in alarm, pointing to a wound in her forehead from which blood had been streaming down her face.

"Is your landlady up?" enquired Mr. Palsey seriously.

"I should rather doubt it, why?" asked Cyril.

"Because Miss Winston should be taken to her bedroom at once, I'm afraid it is a bad cut" replied Mr. Palsey.

"I'll ring" responded Cyril and he acted accordingly.

In ten minutes or so an oldish woman entered holding a candle and her garments had evidently been flung on in a hurry.

"What now sir?" she asked.

"Sorry for disturbing you Mrs. Pollard but this young lady of mine has had a terrible fall and must be taken to her bedroom at once, we thought it was only a faint said Cyril.

"Lardy dardy" exclaimed Mrs. Pollard "poor young lady, I'll see to her at once sir."

She left the room and soon returned with an other servant and the two carried Helen to her bedroom where they bathed her face with cold water and put her to bed as carefully as possible.

"You'd best go for the doctor Mary" said Mrs. Pollard "say nothing to the young gentleman and be as quick as you can.

Meanwhile Cyril and Mr. Palsey sat down to their supper.

"Poor Helen" cried Cyril at last.

"Oh stop that tune do" cried Mr. Palsey "tell us what happened."

"It was all done as pre-arranged. I waited till the man was hanged and the yard emptied of people and while Mr. Winston was putting away the scaffold the blow was struck" said Cyril.

"By you?"

"No"

"Who then?"

"Oh that lout you saw at the door just now, he decided to do the job for £10, I had hard work to make him do it just at first" replied Cyril.

"Indeed" said Mr. Palsey "what was his name?"

"Jack Jenkins" replied Cyril a terrific beggar and drunkard too I belive."

"Oh" laughed Mr. Palsey "and what plan did you adopt about the gun?"

"I did'nt do that" responded Cyril "when Jenkins had done his part of the bussiness, I got a knife, steeped it in red ink and laid it by Mr. Winston's side, as he was prostrated on the ground."

"And that will lead the police to belive it

was suicide you think?" asked Mr. Palsey.

"I think so" replied Cyril with a groan "at last that seemed to be the general opinion when the poor fellow was taken to the mortuary."

"Why do you say "poor fellow?" asked Mr. Palsey.

"Because I do think he is a poor fellow and I'm sorry I ever did the thing" cried Cyril and he brought his fist down on the table with such force that the jug of beer toppled over and fell on the floor.

At that moment the door opened and Mrs. Pollard poked her head in "if you please sir" she said "we've thought fit to send for Dr. Poppet, and he's waiting in the hall."

"Very well" said Cyril with dignity "show him upstairs and when he has seen Miss Winston let him come and have a word with me."

"Miss Winston" cried Mrs. Pollard "why sir is she any relation to the poor hangman as was killed after the affair."

"Yes woman" cried Cyril hotly "she is his daughter, now go for pity's sake"

Mrs. Pollard hastily withdrew and commanded Dr. Poppet to follow her.

"Its a serious case sir" she said cheerily

opening Helen's door "step this way please."

Dr. Poppet stepped that way and went over to Helens bed, where Mary the under servant was putting ointment on the wound.

"Hem" grunted the doctor seriously "not as bad as I feared, but very dangerous for all that, she must be kept very quiet Mrs. Pollard and must only take liquid food, she will probably awake by 5 or 6 o'clock and you may give her a little milk, "I'll call again tomorrow on my rounds, keep her head cool or fever of some kind may set in and effect the brain."

"Your instructions shall be carried out to the letter" said Mrs. Pollard and with that she led him down to talk with Cyril Sheene.

CHAPTER 10

IN THE COURT OF JUSTICE

THE next morning Helen was sadly feverish, though quite sensible.

From the time she woke up 11-30 a.m. she never opened her lips.

She was very feverish and her brain very much upset.

Mr. Palsey decided not to tell Helen the fearful news till she was better and indeed it was a wise thing to do. Helen smiled and looked pleased when Cyril went to see her, but turned away in disgust when Mr. Palsey went near her.

"Helen dear" said Cyril "I am going out now, is there anything you would like me to buy for you?"

"No nothing" replied Helen "let me be alone, I want no one near me."

Cyril sighed, took up his hat and departed.

Entering the sitting room he found Mr. Palsey busy writing.

"James" said Cyril "I must go out now, will you come."

"No I cant" replied Mr. Palsey "I am very busy."

Cyril again gave a sigh of relief, and opening the front door went out.

The storm of the night before had quite subsided and the sun was shining brightly.

To tell the truth, Cyril was very glad to hear that Mr. Palsey could not go out, for he himself was going to the court of Justice to appear as witness concerning the death of Mr.

Winston, which some of the detectives suspected to be murder and some suicide.

The court was densely crowded and in consequence very hot and stuffy.

Cyril forced his way through the crowd and seated himself in the witness box, where sat two other men, Mr. Porter the head warder of the prison and Dr. Slyn, both of whom had held conversation with Mr. Winston, an hour or so before his death.

"Not many witnesses for so serious a case" cried the judge in loud tones as he eyed the three desolate looking men.

Cyril was the first witness as he knew more of the deceased than either of the other two. He had to relate all he knew of Mr. Winston's past life and in conclusion the judge asked him if he thought Mr. Winston looked like commiting suicide when he went to hang Mr. Smith.

Cyril replied that Mr. Winston looked rather morbid on the day of the execution and otherwise no other change was visible.

The judge coughed, "summon the detectives" he cried.

The detectives (three in number) advanced.

"Now Mr. Slag" said the judge, addressing

the leader of the three men, "what is your opinion of this terrible case, murder or suicide?"

Cyril waited open mouthed for the reply, his whole life depended on Mr. Slag's reply.

Mr. Slag evidently did not like giving his opinion in public and he hesitated before speaking.

"I say it was murder" cried one of the other detectives.

Cyril could have screamed with vexation.

"Are you aware Mr. Tix that your opinion was not asked" enquired the judge dryly "Mr. Slag if you please" he added authoritivly.

"I say suicide most decidedly replied Mr. Slag "I am a trained detective my lord and am not likely to make a mistake, Mr. Rennet is also of my opinion."

"Very well" said the judge writing in his note book.

"I am convinced it is suicide and so is the jury and you may go Mr. Slag, the case is with drawn where are Mr. Winston's relations who will bury the deceased?"

A stir in the witness box and Cyril came forward "I will undertake to pay for the burial" he said.

"You?" cried the astonished judge "who are you pray?"

"My name is Cyril Sheene" replied Cyril getting very red "and I am the greatest friend poor Mr. Winston had, besides his daughter who I know is penniless.

"Very well" said the judge "you are a good benevolent man.

Little did the simple minded judge know, that the innocent looking person he addressed in such kind tones was the real murderer of Mr. Winston.

CHAPTER 12

HELEN'S RESOLVE

Cyril Sheene returned home to his lodgings quite satisfied with the conclusion the case had come to. Entering the sitting room, he found Mr. Palsey still busy writing, though the dinner was ready and fast getting cold.

"Still busy?" cried Cyril, pulling off his gloves and sitting down to a tempting looking dinner of juicy well cooked mutton chops, arranged against a mountain of frothy mashed potatoes.

"Yes I'm terrificly busy" responded Mr. Palsey tearing up a large sheet of foolscap as he spoke.

"Well lets have dinner now" responded Cyril sitting down as he spoke.

"Oh all right" replied Mr. Palsey, who was not the least hungry, "where have you been all the morning?"

"In court" responded Cyril absently gazing at the mutton chops.

"In court man!" cried Mr. Palsey "what do you mean?"

"I mean what I say" replied Cyril. "I was in court, acting witness in Mr. Winston's case."

"Really?" gasped Mr. Palsey "what is the result?"

"The case is withdrawn" replied Cyril feverishly, "they are convinced it is suicide."

"Thank goodness" ejaculated Mr. Palsey "then we are well out of the mess."

"Yes" answered Cyril and then vouchsafing no more the two men sat down to their dinner.

Half way through y were interupted by Mrs. Pollard, who came in in a great fluster.

"Please sir" she said in a hurry "Miss Winston seems so queer, she has got up and dressed

herself and wishes to see you at once."

"My stars" screamed Cyril, forgetting in his excitement what a gentleman he was and with that he rushed upstairs to Helen's bedroom.

He found Helen standing by the bed, her hands beating wildly against her heart and a hectic spot burning on her cheek.

She was completely dressed even to her grey travelling cloak which hung limply on her shoulders.

"Cyril," she cried wildly, "I am going home, I can bare this imprisonment no longer."

"Helen, my darling cried Cyril astounded by her words.

"Yes it is true" cried Helen again. "I shall go home now now—this instant why am I kept in ignorance of my father's death? I know who murdered him in spite of secrecy," she screamed," it was Mr. Palsey, that false villain below," "Helen cried Cyril," "how could it be Mr. Palsey, why I should know it if it was he, dont be absurd dear, get into bed again do you know you are very ill, and to go out would be madness."

"I dont care" screamed Helen, her eyes dilating and her cheeks burning.

"I shall go home, I tell you it was Mr. Pal-

sey who murdered my father if you dont know it Cyril, I do so there,"

"Helen" said Cyril firmly "be calm and I will tell you about your poor father's death."

"Tell me" cried Helen and she sank exhausted into a chair.

"I fear" began Cyril "I greatly fear that your poor dear father commited—had reasons for depriving himself of life."

"What!" cried Helen, starting to her feet, "you Cyril Sheene dare to insult me to my face, will you too turn, false, oh how dare you say my father commited suicide."

"I dare Helen because I know it" replied Cyril.

"You dont know it" screached Helen, "oh Cyril," and the poor un nerved girl sank sobbing on the bed.

"Hush Helen," cried Cyril stroking her ruffled hair, "we wont talk about it any more, but indeed you can not go home today, it is impossible."

"I must I must" moaned Helen "oh Cyril let me go, I want to see Marshland."

"Helen, you cant go" replied Cyril "why do you want Marshland?"

"Because she is my only true friend" cried Helen.

"Helen am I not a true friend" asked Cyril reproachfully.

"Yes Cyril you are" said Helen, "but do let me go."

Cyril remembering the doctors directions that Helen was to have everything she wanted, replied "very well Helen, you may go to-morrow, and now get back to bed and rest."

"No, no" said Helen "I must go tonight."

"But your father is to be burried today," replied Cyril.

"Never mind" cried Helen shaking her aching head, "It would break my heart to attend the funeral, I must go tonight."

"Very well" said Cyril "I will go with you, by the 8-40 train, but now do rest darling."

"Thank you, thank you Cyril" replied Helen gratefully and closing her eyes she fell into a heavy sleap."

CHAPTER 13

THE DISGUISE

Cyril was greatly troubled about Helen's strange conduct; he knew it was not good

for her to travel in her present condition, and then again it would do her just as much harm not to go as she desired it so much.

He went down to the sitting room and related all the story to Mr. Palsey and waited eagerly for a reply.

"Why man alive!" shrieked Mr. Palsey "this is greatest piece of luck we could possibly hope for."

"Luck?" cried Cyril "what do you mean?"

"Why dont you see?" said Mr. Palsey "it is impossible for Helen to travel alone, and therefore you and I must accompany her, and of course it will be the very chance of chances to rob the safe."

"But you cant go with her" replied Cyril "though of course I must."

"Why cant I go if you please?"

"For the simple reason that Helen suspects you to be guilty of murdering her father," replied Cyril, trying to appear unconcerned.

"What?" shrieked Mr. Palsey thumping his knees vigerously, 'dont be an idiot, how can she suspect me?"

"Well she does" answered Cyril "but you may be quite easy, for she will not speak of it."

She'd better not" cried Mr. Palsey biting his moustache.

"But you see James, it is quite impossible for you to travel with us, so you had better wait and come by a later train, there is one at 9-12 I know" replied Cyril.

"No that wont do," said Mr. Palsey "it would upset my plans, besides making it too late to rob the safe with ease."

"What will you do then?" asked Cyril. "I will disguise myself" returned Mr. Palsey "I have a heavy green ulster upstairs, which I know Miss Winston has not seen and grey slouch hat; and a false beard which I used when acting a play some time ago and if I put a little walnut juice upon my countenance I think I shall be sufficiently at least to deceive Miss Winston."

"Capital" exclaimed Cyril, "put on the things now and see how you look."

Mr. Palsey rummaged in his portmanteau and produced the required articles. The beard was a trifle crumpled, but Cyril who was neat handed quickly combed it out and made it look as good as new.

Mr. Palsey then put on the ulster and big felt hat and attached the beard to his chin

by a bit of elastic. Cyril then applied to his face, and in a minute he was disguised into a fearce foreign looking man.

"Its a splended get up" said Cyril, eyeing the villain admiringly.

"I wont take it off" said Mr. Palsey opening his purse and taking out ten shillings "I will go straight to the station and wait there, give this money to Mrs. Pollard for me, it what I owe her for the lodgings you know.

"Very well" cried Cyril "but you'll have a long wait at the station."

"I know" said Mr. Palsey "but I can amuse myself with a few comic papers and a pipe."

"So with a hearty shake of the hands the two villains sealed the compact.

CHAPTER 14

HOME AGAIN

Cyril was very busy all that afternoon; he barely had time to attend Mr. Winston's funeral, which he did however for politeness sake.

It was not a grand funeral by any means and I think it would have broken Helen's heart

to see the plain unvarnished coffin which her poor father's remains were deposited in.

When Cyril returned from the ceremony, he settled his accounts with Mrs. Pollard and then proceeded to pack his portmanteau, which piece of business did not take him very long.

He was about to depart from his room, when something lying upon the floor attracted his attention.

It was a water coloured painting of Mr. Winston.

How Cyril's heart smote him, as he gazed at those calm, stern features and mild blue eyes, with so much trust in their orbs.

He hastily shuffled the painting into his pocket, and with something between a groan and a sarcastic laugh, made a rapid retreat down the stair case.

Helen was waiting in the hall.

She looked a very different girl from the bright rosy faced Helen of a week ago.

Her cheeks were white and hollow save for one hectic spot and her great hazel eyes seemed too dark for her face. Her dark hair was limp and uncurled, and her lips were as ashy as her face. She looked a sad little picture, indeed, as she stood there in the hall, with

her grey cloak loosly buttoned round her, and her new black crape hat contrasting queerly with her ghost-like countenance.

Cyril's heart of stone was quite touched as he saw her looking so vastly changed.

"Come Helen" he said carresingly as he patted her hair behind, "it feels like old times to be walking with you again."

"Perhaps it does to you" quoth Helen bitterly "but to me it is unbearable."

Cyril said nothing, but gently helped her down the steps. In an hours time they were at the station.

Helen sat on a seat to rest till the train came up, and Cyril went over to the bookstall, keeping close to a remarkably tall foreign looking gentleman who was laughing over Tit Bits.

"Come away," whispered Helen to Cyril "that man reminds me of the two faced villain Mr. Palsey."

"Helen" muttered Cyril between his teeth "be quiet do; please to remember that with all his villainy he is a perfect gentleman."

"Ah" said Helen "you too admit that he is a villain."

Cyril saw he had made a mistake and the hot blood rushed to his face.

"Dear me" he said cooly "I am always blurting out things I dont mean."

Helen was beginning to see through him.

"Cyril" she said faintly "I hope you are not a villain too."

"Why of course I'm not" replied Cyril "come, here is the train."

Helen followed Cyril to a first class carriage, noticed that the foreign looking man, otherwise Mr. Palsey, jumped into a second class department and closed the door with a bang.

"This is a fast train" said Cyril as he got on to the seat.

"Indeed?" replied Helen, and with a deep drawn sigh she placed her bundle on the rack.

"Helen wont you eat your supper," asked Cyril "it is nearly nine o'clock, you must be hungry.

"Very well" replied Helen and she opened her bag.

"What have you got?" asked Cyril eargerly.

"Only a small pot of calf's foot jelly" answered Helen.

"Oh" said Cyril in a dissopointed tone, "why you ought to have had fruit and cold fowl."

"Dont speak to me of cold fowls" cried

Helen in disgust and having finished her jelly she sank into repose.

The train was an express and reached Kenalham a little before 10-30.

Helen burst into tears as she stepped on to the platform. "Oh how sad, how sad" she moaned.

The dog cart was waiting for them and Cyril jumped quickly in, helping Helen as he did so.

For ten minutes or more, the cart stopped, and Helen found herself once more on the threshold of her home.

CHAPTER 15

THE ROBBERY

THE door was opened by Marshland who having heard the fearful news was attired in deep mourning.

"My darling Miss Helen!" cried the old servant.

"Oh Marshland" cried Helen "I feel so terribly ill."

"Come to bed at once miss and you shall have some hot wine" said Marshland "step

into the drawing room sir" she added seeing Cyril waiting in the passage.

"Goodnight Helen dear" cried Cyril, then turning to the servant he added "thank you I will rest for one moment, but I must go then, as I have a friend waiting for me in the town."

"Very well sir" said Marshland "you can let yourself out cant you?"

"Oh yes" cried Cyril and he betook himself to the drawing room.

As I have already mentioned, Helen was feeling weak and ill and her head ached as though it would split. Marshland put her to bed very carefully and gave her some hot wine to drink.

Once in between the beautiful cool sheets with the breeze blowing in at the open window stirring the dainty white muslin curtains, Helen dropped into a dull heavy sleep, but she was so restless that Marshland dared not leave her.

As the clock on the stairs struck 12-30 He,en seemed to grow quieter, so Marshland drew down the blind, snuffed the candle and went downstairs.

She bolted the hall door and peeped into the drawing room.

"I heard Mr. Sheene go some hours ago" she muttered "and all the windows are bolted, so off I go to bed to rest my weary limbs."

So the old woman went to her room, knocking at Gladys's door as she went, to assure that she was going to bed, for Gladys who was highly nervous had insisted on this.

Helen slept heavily till about 2 o'clock in the morning, when she was awakened by some strange sounds below.

She sat up in bed and listened, the sounds continued and feeling frightened she called Marshland.

But the old servant was asleep and for a little while the noises ceased. Helen thinking it was her fancy turned in her bed and fell into a doze. In less than 2 minutes she was awakened by the furious ringing of a bell.

For a moment her heart stood still and her very blood ran cold. Then in one desperate moment she recollected the sound of the bell.

Springing from her bed she flew to the door crying as she did so "the safe, the safe!!"

Wildly she flew down the passage her brain dazed her heart beating loudly.

Her eyes were too dilated to see, and in flying along she struck her head against a

tall old clock and would have fallen headlong downstairs, to certain death, but a pair of arms were hastily flung around her and in another moment two unconscios figures were lying motionless in the still dark passage with only the pale moonlight lighting up their rigid faces.

CHAPTER 16

"SETTLED"

MARSHLAND had not been awakened by the bell and so when she got up next morning at 6 o'clock, she was entirely innocent of the nights events. Putting on her apron she hastily went downstairs. Half way down the passage she caught sight of something white.

"Tut tut" she exclaimed "I wonder if those are my clean aprons or caps, they must have fallen from the beams." But here her wonderings were overun by the fact that the white things were no other than the prostrate bodies of Helen and Gladys.

Marshland uttered a stifled cry, but recovering her presence of mind she instantly raised Helen in her arms. Gladys had by this

time quite recovered and was kneeling by her cousin on the floor.

"Raise yourself Miss Gladys" said Marshland "and help me take Miss Helen to her room."

Gladys rose directly and Helen was soon upon her bed once more.

She soon opened her eyes and fixed them on her cousin, "go away" she said calmly "I want to speak to Marshland."

Gladys left the room and Helen's calm manner changed to one of absolute fury.

Darting to her feet, she seized Marshland's shoulder, her white lips parted in feverish anxiety.

"The safe" she cried quick Marshland it has been robbed—I heard the bell—go and see quick, oh Marshland hurry—hurry."

Marshland had her doubts as to the robbery, but to quiet Helen she went downstairs to ascertain.

Entering the drawing room to her great alarm she found the window wide open, and she knew she had shut and bolted it the night before.

Advancing in some consternation she saw the bolt had *not* been tampered with and her

eyes wandered to the safe. Dragging back the curtain she perceived to her great horror that the gauze door was wide open and the black leather bag which contained all the money, gone.

"Oh Heavens" ejaculated the old woman "all the money gone, yes every brass farthing of it, my poor Miss Helen you'll have to go begging now and in sober earnest too."

It may here be mentioned that Mr. Winston had left a will leaving all his money to Helen, and the gold which that bag contained was all he had left, so that gone, Helen would have to set about to earn her own living. Mr. Winston had before his death written on a slip of paper "all this gold is bequeathed to my daughter Helen on the day when I shall be called upon to die." This he had sealed with his private seal and put at the bottom of the bag so that the thief (whoever he might be) had carried that signature with him.

Marshland lost no time in seeing what else had been robbed and found to her relief that the ivory box containing the valuable old jewils had not been touched.

Taking it in her trembling hand, she carried it to Helen's room. "Here Miss" she said,

see the jewils have not been touched but—but—her white lips refused to say any thing else, but Helen took up the strain, "the money is gone, yes I knew it Marshland and I am left alone a beggar in this cruel, cruel world. All this she uttered in so calm a tone as to quite supprise Marshland.

"Dont say alone miss" cried the faithful servant, for I will be with you through thick and thin.

At that moment the door opened and Gladys announced that Mr. Sheene was waiting in the parlour, together with Mr. Palsey. Helen dressed herself quickly and leaning on Gladys's arm for support she entered the much disturbed drawing room.

Cyril was standing by the window, his hands in his trouser pockets looking desperatly ill.

Mr. Palsey looked as stern and hard as ever, and with his cigarette between his lips he appeared to be taking a general survey of the room.

"Good morning Miss Winston" he cried totally ignoring his future wife, "if you have any brains they ought to tell you what I am here about. Before Helen had time to reply Gladys stepped forward and laying her hand

on Mr. Palsey's arm looked in his face steadily and said. "James, I dont know what you intend saying but I am sure it is cruel and cutting and I beg and pray of you to keep quiet whatever it is. Helen is, as you know in great trouble about her dear father, and added to that, a robbery has been commited in the night, which has deprived her of all the money which had been left her and so she has now to earn her own living——"

"Hold" cried Cyril suddenly turning round, "I have already heard of this terrible robbery and though I have to grovell in the very ground, Helen shall never have to earn her own living, in the presence of everyone here I repeat my words. I intend as soon as possible to take Helen to London and marry her on the first opportunity which presents itself; I have" he added, "though no one may know it, a private bussiness in Holburn, which consists of a small office in which I employ two clerks, my living appartments are at the back of this office or (home affair) as I generally call it, and mark my words all of you here Helen would lead a very happy life, and if my bussiness should prosper I will go and live in Paris or Rome if Helen should prefer it."

"Thank you Cyril" said Helen, "I will spend one more week here to collect my belongings and then only too gladly will I go with you to your office. I have only one request to make."

"What is that?" asked Cyril.

"A very simple one" replied Helen "only that Marshland should come with us and be our servant."

"Certainly," answered Cyril. "I shall be only too pleased, for the one servant I have is just leaving and I am sure Marshland will suit."

"Pardon me" said Mr. Palsey "I think Cyril, if you take my advice you will leave this wicked interfeering old woman behind I warn you she will be the plague of your life, for I myself have had experience of what she can do poking her nose into people's rooms, the meddling old cat."

"Mr. Palsey" said Helen calmly and with great dignity "perhaps you will allow Cyril to settle this matter, and if you will allow me to add, I would far rather be a meddling old cat, than a cruel hard hearted person who could murder a good innocent man for the sake of his money, and then could look the

daughter of that man in the face with a cold unflinching gaze."

Gladys uttered a low scream and staggered towards the door; she is loosing her head she sobbed, "going mad, and all through you James." For Gladys knew nothing of Helen's suspicions.

"No Gladys" replied Helen, "dont cry, for I am not loosing my head or going mad either, and you have my utmost pity for having a husband such as he."

But nothing could soothe poor Gladys and as Helen stooped to comfort her, Mr. Palsey took the opportunity of speaking to Cyril.

"You idiot" he hissed "look what you have led Helen up to, making her speak to me like that, now I doubt if Gladys will belive in me, and if she does not there will be an end to my rich marriage."

"I dont care" said Cyril, for he truly felt he had the upper hand, "I consider it would be a very good thing if Miss Lincarrol does not marry you for she is too good a girl to be joined with a low villain like you."

"Very well" cried Mr. Palsey savagely "as you evidently consider yourself a saint, (though you did help me in the murder and

other matters too) perhaps it will be better for both of us if we seperate at once.

I have my half of the money and you have yours, so that is all settled, you can take Helen to London and marry her and I will take Gladys to Norfolk where all her relations live and marry her when I get settled and the less we hear of each other the better, that is my opinion and I hope it suits you.

"It does" replied Cyril calmly "let us tell the girls and the sooner you and Gladys get packed off the better for I must stay here another week with Helen."

"Gladys" cried Mr. Palsey firmly "get up at once and stop crying."

"Gladys dried her eyes and sat up.

"Look here" continued Mr. Palsey, "you and I are going back to Norfolk this evening as soon as we can mannage it, and Mr. Sheene intends stopping another week with Miss Winston till he goes to London and remember the less you and she hear of one another the better; you will be much better for the loss of her company and your relations too would much rather you left here, it is taking effect on your health my dear, so be ready to start by 6 o'clock this evening and I will call for

you; you and Helen will have plenty of time to say your last adieu before that; is that settled?" he added turning to Cyril.

"Quite" replied Cyril.

Gladys broke into heart broken sobbing but being used to obey she ran quickly upstairs to collect her things.

With a cry Helen ran to Cyril and put her arms round his neck.

Mr. Palsey bit his lips and turning to the window he turned over the past events in his mind and he thought how very well he had managed that last little bit of business.

CHAPTER 17

BOUND FOR NORFOLK

LET us now return to Gladys.

Arrived at her bedroom she began to collect her various articles of clothing in a hazy and disturbed manner, every now and then sitting down to burst into a terrible fit of weeping.

It took her over half an hour to pack up, and then having bathed her burning face, she began to feel very hungry.

Finding a few biscuits in a tin, she lost no

time in eating them and then she rang her bell.

To her supprise Helen came to the door instead of Marshland.

"Oh dear Gladys" cried Helen kindly "I am so very sorry that you are going."

"Oh Helen," sobbed Gladys "it nearly breaks my heart to think of it, and we may not even write to each other."

"Dont say that" cried Helen, "if ever I can manage it I'll always send you a note privately, for I shall never forget Gladys that you saved my life."

Gladys could not speak for crying.

"Now Gladys" said Helen "do stop crying or you will be ill, did you want anything when you rang just now."

"Oh yes please" replied Gladys "if I might have something to eat, I am so very hungry."

"Certainly, dear" said Helen and she darted downstairs, soon to return with a plate of well cut ham and a couple of poached eggs and a comforting cup of coffee.

Having spread this out, she sat down to watch Gladys eat it.

The poor girl looked very worn out and tired and great red and black lines encircled her

blue eyes. "oh Helen" she said at last "do tell me what you meant by speaking so strongly to James just now.

The tears came into Helen's eyes, "dont ask me Gladys dear" she said, some day I will contrive to let you know by letter but I cant tell you now."

A silence followed and then Helen spoke again, "do you know" she said. "I am very glad things have turned out like this. I shall be happy too and perhaps forget all about me and all this misery."

"Oh Helen" cried Gladys "I will never forget you it will be impossible."

"I dont know" said Helen "you see its like this, although we shall write to each other (for my mind is made up on that score) when once you are happy, though you will not exactly forget *me*, you will forget this misery at parting and so you will be able to think of me without pain or regret, and it will be like a wound which though healed over is still to be seen, do you under stand?"

"Yes dear Helen" said Gladys "there is certainly truth in what you say, but do you think we shall either of us be happy again?"

"Yes" said Helen with a smile, "I do, light

is certainly breaking through the darkness after all Gladys"

Ah Helen!, happily for you that you can see the bright light appearing, but there are dark clouds gathering in the distance which you do not see but which nevertheless are coming nearer and nearer and will soon burst over your head and extinguish the sunshine and the light.

The dreary morning passed away at last and the afternoon followed suit. A quarter to six found Gladys and Helen taking a last farewell in the drawing room before Mr. Palsey arrived.

"Oh Helen shall we ever meet again, sobbed Gladys.

"Hush hush" said Helen "dont cry Gladys and let me give you some advice before you go. Dont sob or show any emotion when you bid me goodbye and if afterwards Mr. Palsey should mention me to you be quite calm and show him you do not care, when next we meet I'll tell you my reasons and be sure they're good ones."

Voices were heard at the front door and going into the hall, they found Mr. Palsey and Cyril talking and a carriage waiting at the gate.

"Goodbye Miss Lincarrol" said Cyril as he took her hand "I am sorry you have to go."

"Not at all" said Gladys brightly "goodbye Mr. Sheene, thanks for all your kindness."

Here Mr. Palsey interposed "goodbye Miss Winston" he said raising his hat.

Helen drew herself up and gave him a look (such a one as once seen never forgotten) and then turning to her friend said, "well goodbye Gladys, a pleasant journey to you dear."

"Goodbye Helen" said Gladys bravely and calmly and without a break in her voice.

"I hope you will enjoy yourself in London."

Mr. Palsey looked astounded, he had expected a loud fit of crying at least.

"Wont you say goodbye to me Miss Winston he asked sheepishly.

"No cried Helen in a laud voice, "it was an evil day for you Mr. Palsey when my good father asked you to his house."

Mr. Palsey jumped into the open fly and put his bag beside him.

Helen stood on the steps waving her hand with tears in her eyes, while Gladys, for the sake of the friend she loved, sat erect and tearless in the carriage which soon wheeled her away from "Beach Dale" and its occupants.

CHAPTER 18

THE OFFICE

LEFT alone in the dreary little cottage, a sense of utter lonliness came over Helen. She truly felt as though the one spark of happiness in her life had faded. Sitting down in an arm chair, she took up some crochet and tried to do a little work before sunset.

In a few minutes Cyril entered, fresh from a country walk.

"Ah Helen" he cried "you're busy I see."

"No I'm not" replied Helen sadly "did you want me for anything?"

"Well I was thinking it might be as well to go and see the autioneer, Mr. Graham," replied Cyril "you see all this furniture must be sold and a week is but a short time to settle everything."

"Yes I presume that would be best" said Helen with a sigh "where does this Mr. Graham live?" "Not a very long way off" replied Cyril "49 Eastern Grove is his address"

"Oh yes I know" said Helen "when shall we start?"

"Now, if you like" said Cyril

"Very well," and Helen tossed away her crochet and put on her hat.

It did not take very long to reach Eastern Grove, a pretty little street at the end of Kenelham. Helen stood by while Cyril arranged matters to his own taste. At last all was settled and Mr. Graham politely promised to be round at Beach Dale by 9 o'clock the next morning.

The next three days were busy ones indeed for Helen. All day she was flying up and downstairs, from attic to kitchen placing the furniture to be sold in lots and keeping what she wanted to take, in her own bedroom. Marshland helped all she could but being old and stiff she could do little but sit in the kitchen and moan at the loss of her beloved master's goods.

Friday came at last (the day Cyril had arranged for starting) and Helen was up early taking a last look at the rooms, garden walks etc., that she loved.

It was a boiling hot day and they had to start in the middle of the heat.

A large waggon came to the door wherein all the odd pieces of furniture were packed

and the trunks and boxes being put on the top of that, Helen and Marshland got a small wooden bench which they put at the door of the waggon for, as Marshland truly remarked "Air was better than comfort," and there they seated themselves to drive to the station—Cyril had gone on to take the tickets and see about a comfortable carriage.

It was two o'clock by the time they reached Holburn.

Cyril jumped out, ordered a hansom while Helen attended to the luggage.

"Now Marshland" cried Cyril "you and Miss Helen will kindly get into this hansom and I'll tell the man where to drive to, I have a bussiness matter to settle, but you can tell the servant girl I'll be into tea."

Helen and Marshland got hastily into the hansom, to the old servant's inexpressible delight who had never ridden in anything but the customary Kenelham dog cart, and the waggon she had recently quitted. Helen however was too tired to notice anything and the new sights and sounds had no charm for her country eyes.

Presently the cab stopped at a small dreary looking office with the name Sheene & Co:

in guilt letters on the window. Two men evidently the clerks, were watching with intense excitement the descent of the two ladies from the cab, their faces being pressed upon the iron blind of the office window.

Helen went up the steps and timidly rang the "visitors bell."

It was soon answered by a rought untidy looking servant girl, with no cap and a dirty cotton dress, whom Marshland eyed with intense disgust.

"Are you Mr. Sheene's ladies?" asked the girl.

"Yes" replied Helen "and Mr. Sheene wished me to say you were to show us to our rooms at once, he himself will not be in till tea time."

"All right" responded the servant "step and in and follow me."

She then led the way down a narrow passage past the home affair, till she came to a door which she flung open, announcing it was the sitting room.

"You wont want your bedrooms yet awhile" she said "because they're not ready."

"Oh pray dont trouble" said Helen.

"Very well" replied the girl and she went off closing the door behind her.

"The slovenly creature" cried Marshland "Mr. Sheene has evidently had no practice in choosing his domestics.

The room in which they found themselves was rather small and very stuffey, the window being tight shut and the blind down. A red carpet adorned the floor a common deal table with a check cloth stood in the middle of the room, and three chairs were carefully arranged round it. A leather armchair was by the fireplace adorned by a crochet antimicassa, and a sofa of the same description was by the window. The mantle piece was furnished with two glass vases, and a clock, and a large photograph of Cyril and his two clerks. A sideboard was by the door covered with a clean cloth, a parrafin lamp, two trays and a bowl of lavender.

"What do you think of it?" asked Helen after she had opened the window and taken off her hat and gloves.

"Humph" said Marshland looking round "pretty fair, but law Miss Helen, comparing it with your father's dainty little parlour its a mere scullery."

"Yes" said Helen "but dont let us hurt poor Cyril's feelings, no doubt he likes it."

"No doubt" replied Marshland.

By 5 o'clock Cyril came in, very hot but happy for all that. "Well Helen" he said "what do you think of your future abode?"

"Oh its very nice" answered Helen.

"Well let us ring for tea" cried Cyril "you will take your meal with us tonight Marshland, but tomorrow you will find your place in the kitchen with Alice the maid, who will do all the hard work while you preside."

Marshland looked pleased but said nothing.

Alice brought in the tea, and the three made it off shrimps and bread and butter and by that time Helen was pleased to go to bed, quite pleased with her first day in London.

Helen's bedroom was at the top of a very steep staircase and it was even more stuffy than the sitting room. A rather dirty white blind hung in the window, which Marshland instantly tore down, "the filthy rag" she exclaimed "never mind Miss Helen, in a few weeks, I'll have this fit for a lady and the sitting room too for that matter.

The iron bed stead was of the collapsible kind and Helen had to prop it up with empty

trunks in order to get a night's rest, but what with the squalling of the office cats and the noise of the clerks and servants below, it was in the small hours of the morning before either she or Marshland got a wink of sleep.

CHAPTER 19

IMPROVEMENTS

It was 8 o'clock, the following morning when Helen was awakened by hearing a loud dispute outside her door between Marshland and Alice Grimstone (the maid).

Glancing at her watch, Helen jumped out of bed and began her toilet and half way through she was interrupted by Alice bouncing in announcing it was gone 8 o'clock and would she (Helen) care about any water for washing. Helen declared she would, upon which she was presented with a can of hot water and a clean towel, soap already having been provided.

Having placed the last hair pin in her knob and fastenned her white blouse, Helen went down to the sitting room, where a smell of hot coffee and fried bacon greated her nose.

"Ah this is Marshland's cooking" thought Helen as she raised the cover of the dish. A great improvement was also visible in the room itself. It had been well dusted and swept and a few london flowers adorned the mantle shelf, a clean white curtain hung in the window, and Helen's work box and other little articles lay about the room, making it look far more home like than on the preceding evening.

Cyril (Helen had heard) rose very late, so she was forced to partake of her breakfast alone.

As soon as she had finnished, she rang the bell and ordered a fresh meal to be got ready for Cyril, for she really wished to please him and hoped in a few days time to have the house really nice.

Then Helen thought she would go out and buy a few things, so calling Marshland she said "I am going out now Marshland, and lunch will be at 1.30 if you please. Mr. Sheene likes high tea at 7 in the future we will follow this rule, breakfast at 9. lunch at 1.30, high tea at 7, Wine and biscuits 9.30."

"Very well miss" replied Marshland "I'll see to it"

"Yes" said Helen and do make that girl work for pity's sake, she is so lazy."

"That she is miss" replied Marshland "She'll find her work set now I've come."

Helen laughed "very well" she replied "I'll be in soon. I only want to buy a chicken and a yard or so of muslin for curtains."

So going out, Helen hailed a hansom and got proudly in, much to the envy of Netherby and Wilson (the two clerks) to whom she had not yet been introduced.

And so day followed day and Helen always found plenty to do. She was a first rate house keeper and Cyril treasured her accordingly. Marshland too made vast improvements in the lower regons. Alice was made to work hard and keep herself tidy.

A bright yellow canary was purchased, and hung in the sitting room window to Helen's great delight, and she had no time to be unhappy. Cyril seemed to prefer being engaged so the marriage was put off, and Helen was once more light hearted and merry and her gay laugh might often be heard as she chatted cheerily to the clerks or played comic songs on the little harmonium.

And yet no one is there to warn Helen of the approaching danger and misery.

CHAPTER 20

THE SILVER TEAPOT

TIME sped on and nothing happened to alarm or upset Helen untill a certain October morning.

She had just commenced her breakfast, when in came Cyril attired in his best black suit and stiff collar.

"Why Cyril" cried Helen "how very early you are."

"Yes I am" responded Cyril triumphantly "I am going to see a friend who lives in Piccadilly and I doubt if I shall be back before 10 or 11 tonight."

"Really?" said Helen, "well make a good breakfast or you'll be quite done up."

Cyril made a hearty meal and then went to the front door to see if the weather promised to be fair; it looked rather gloomy, but no rain fell. As though a sudden thought had struck him, Cyril turned round and entered the office.

"Netherby" he cried sharply "who's afternoon out is it, your's or Wilson's?

"It is Mr. Wilson's sir" replied Netherby.

"Then see he does'nt have it" said Cyril shortly "I have my own reasons for wishing you both to remain at home today, and dont forget the office is in your charge today Netherby; admit no gossiping women or tradesmen."

"No sir" replied the clerk. Cyril turned to leave the office, nearly knocking Helen over as he did so. "Are you off?" she enquired "put on your overcoat dear, it is very chilly."

"All right" said Cyril and he reached his blue melton from the peg.

As Helen was helping him on with his coat she noticed something silver sticking out of the breast pocket.

"Why whatever is this?" she asked in supprise. "it looks like the best silver tea pot."

"Best silver tea pot!" cried Cyril scornfully, as though a man cant carry his cigarette case about with him."

But he looked uncommonly angry for all that and Helen had seen and felt quite enough to convince her that it was the best tea pot

and she felt her heart turn sick as she closed the front door after Cyril's retreating figure.

CHAPTER 21

THE PAWN TICKET

HELEN'S heart was beating fast, as she went back to the sitting room, "oh dear" she cried sitting down on the sofa "whatever is Cyril up to I wonder it *was* a tea pot I know and it was wrapped in cotton wool too for it felt soft, I do hope he is up to no tricks."

Finding nothing to do Helen sat down to strum on the harmonium, but this did not soothe her spirits and she wandered about the room till her eye fell on a little white ticket lying on the hearth rug. She could not bear to see paper on the floor, so she hastily picked it up, and before tossing it into the fire she looked at it well to make sure it was nothing important.

Helen know enough to see at first glance it was a pawn ticket for a valuable silver sugar baisen worth £1.10.0.

Her cheeks grew white as she read it and she felt her fingers growing stiff. "Of course"

she cried "its as plain as day light, Cyril has pawned the best sugar baisen for a few trumpery shillings, oh I'm sure he is getting into bad company" and she commenced to weep. "And I know he means to pawn the tea pot too."

But this was only the beginning of another long series of troubles for poor Helen, but happily for her she did not know that or it might have driven her mad.

CHAPTER 22

AN UNEXPECTED VISIT

HELEN'S weeping had given her a headache and she was taking a doze on the sofa, when angry voices were heard at the front door. The voices were those of Mr. Netherby and a young lady evidently in great distress.

Helen came to the passage to hear what was the matter "I tell you I've had orders from Mr. Sheene to let no gossiping women inside this office" cried Mr. Netherby. "But I'm not a gossiping woman" said the lady in agitation.

"And how do I know that?" enquired Mr.

Netherby. "I tell you I am a hater of gossip" screamed the lady "and here it is pouring rain and you have the audacity to keep me waiting at the front door, when I ask to see the lady of the house."

"There is no lady of this house" said Mr. Netherby "except Mrs. Marshland and she rules it with a firm hand"

"I want to see Miss Winston" cried the lady now almost in tears.

Here Helen interupted, "Mr. Netherby" she said "If this lady wishes to see me, kindly let her in at once."

"I've got the master's orders not to" replied Netherby firmly.

"Insolent person!" cried Helen "obey me at once, open the door."

Netherby was alarmed and opening the door he fled into the office leaving his mistress to admit her guest if she would.

"Can I do anything for you my good lady?" asked Helen opening the door wide.

With a cry the lady flung herself into Helen's arms, saying "oh Helen Helen, how very glad I am to see you."

"Why Gladys" cried Helen "how came you here?" "Oh its a long story" said Gladys (for

it was she) "if I may come in, I'll tell it to you."

"Yes do" said Helen "stay the whole day if you will, for Cyril is out and I am entirely alone" So saying Helen led the way to the sitting room, where Gladys soon divested herself of her dripping cloak and hat, and sat down by the fire to warm herself. "How dreadfully wet you are" said Helen as she shook out Gladys's cloak.

"I had to walk all the way from Holburn station" replied Gladys "there were no cabs to be seen" "Dear dear" said Helen "I hope you wont take cold."

"Not I" laughed Gladys "and now Helen dear if you are ready I'll tell you why I came here."

"Yes do" pleaded Helen drawing her chair to the fire. "It is a long story" mused Gladys gazing into the fire, as though she could see the events of the past three months of her life written there in letters of red and gold. "as you know Helen, when I left Kenelham I went with James straight to Norfolk, where my parents and relations live. James and I stayed there for, say three weeks, and during that time I was perfectly happy. I did not

write to you as I didn't know your address, I presume you did'nt know mine. Well at the end of these three weeks James got an invatation to go and stay with some people in Brighton and he asked me to go too I was glad to do so as I had never been to that part at all. So it was arranged for me to go and we started. We had not been there a week when a marked changed came over James. He grew white and thin and seemed so terribly nervous about the smallest thing. Men were constantly calling to see him and after their visits he looked even worse. It was not a large house where we stayed, and my room was next to his. He went to bed very late and I fancy he slept badly. I constantly heard him moan and walk about his room, and what terrified me so much was he used to talk about murders and robberies. So I took to listening to him, by putting my bed close to the wall. And I believe he found it out, for he took to ill treating me, that is to say he was not kind, and he called me horrible names. I felt it very much indeed and it must have made me look ill, for Mrs Martin (the hostess) said she thought the sea air did not agree with me and advised James to take me to some place where I had

not been before. Accordingly we arranged to take a small house in Richmond for a few months till I got better. There it is we are living now. We have most comfortable rooms in a nice house overlooking the terrace gardens. Our landlady is a very good soul, and though I am much better for the change, James is not, he remains the same. All at once I remembered what you said to him that day about a murder. So I resolved to come and find out where you lived. I told James I wanted a whole day to do as I liked and I took a train for Holburn and I was directed where to go to, and here I am arrived in the very knick of time, just as Mr. Sheene is off for the day and you are quite alone to answer any questions I put to you."

During the latter part of Gladys's story Helen had grown very white and she now paced the room in breathless agitation.

"What is it Helen?" enquired Gladys.

"Yes I knew I was right" muttered Helen half aloud "it is true too true alas! but my revenge is at hand."

"Helen do sit down" cried Gladys "you look quite scared, I hope my story has not frightened you."

"Frightenned me, No" cried Helen loudly "you have only confirmed doubts which have been lingering in my brain for month's past."

"Doubts, what doubts." asked Gladys.

"Oh Gladys" cried Helen bursting into tears "thank goodness you came to me today, for you may yet be saved from a terrible misfortune."

"For pity's sake Helen speak out" cried Gladys "you talk like a tragedian Gladys" said Helen "did you say that Mr. Palsey talked about murders and robberies?"

"Yes" replied Gladys sadly "he certainly made use of those two words."

"Shall I tell you why?" asked Helen "I shall be much obliged if you will" answered Gladys.

"Mr. Palsey's conscience has begun to trouble him" replied Helen.

"Oh Helen what do you mean?" cried Gladys wildly.

"Simply this" said Helen "you know when my poor father died, people said it was suicide."

"Yes, but I never belived that" said Gladys with marked descision.

"Evidently the detectives have found out

their mistake" replied Helen "you say, men are constantly calling on Mr. Palsey."

"Yes" replied Gladys "they are, but Helen whatever do you mean."

"Gladys" said Helen, "dont hate me for what I am going to tell you; I only do it because I love you and wish to save you, it is a blessing you came here today, I suppose in another week you would have married Mr. Palsey but you wont now, for the man you call your lover is the murderer of my father."

Gladys gave a loud groan and sank helpless to the floor.

Helen ran to lift her up and after dashing some water on her face was happy to see her open her eyes.

"Gladys, dear Gladys" she cried "I should not have told you."

"Yes, yes" said Gladys faintly, "you did quite right, only it was such a shock to me, after beliving in him all these months."

"Of course it is" replied Helen soothingly "thank goodness I shall never have cause to doubt Cyril's honour."

"Oh Helen what shall I do?" moaned poor Gladys "to think of going back to sleep in

the house with a villian like him "he might try to murder me in the night."

"Why not stay here a few nights till you think of some plans" suggested Helen "we have heaps of room."

"Oh no no" cried Gladys desperately "I dare not vex James like that and besides Mr. Sheene would not have me in his house."

"Oh Gladys" cried Helen "he would be only too pleased to be of help to you."

"No he would not" said Gladys "he hates me."

"Gladys!" screamed Helen "how can you?"

"It is true" said Gladys "and I will tell you why."

Helen gave a snort of disgust but she listened attentively for all that.

"You see" said Gladys "I had to walk from Holburn Station as you know and it took me some time as I did not know the way; I had just caught sight of this office from the opposite side of the road and was going to cross, when the door opened and Mr. Sheene himself came out, he did not see me at first, he appeared to be looking at the sky, but the moment he caught sight of me his face darkened directly, he looked at me for a minute with

posative hatred in his eyes, and then turning round he went into the office, to give an order, I presume that order was that no women were to be let in, because the instant I asked to see you, I was furiously assaulted by a presuming clerk, who called me a gossiping woman, and no end of horrid names."

"Oh" said Helen rather crossly "I think you must be mistaken, but all the same if you wont stay the night, you wont,"

"I really can not," replied Gladys.

"Did Cyril speak to you when he came out again?" enquired Helen.

"Dear me no" replied Gladys "I took jolly good care he should'nt, so I bolted into a confectioners to escape him, where I had to go to the trouble of buying a bath bun; but anything was better than not seeing you."

"Dont be sarcastic" returned Helen hotly "you dont treasure me as much as that."

"Dont I?" cried Gladys "when I wanted to see you, I was not going to be snubbed by an insolent clerk, I would have braved him even if you had not come though I thank my stars you did come all the same, it is very degrading to be seen arguing with a common city clerk."

"So I should imagine" replied Helen "I cant say I have ever been in the same strait myself; I am on very good terms with both Netherby and Wilson."

"Are you?" said Gladys "which do you like best."

"Well you see Netherby is rather alarmed at me" replied Helen "since I blew him up for attempting to touch the organ without leave; but then he is more to be trusted than Wilson, who thinks nothing of breaking his word, telling stories etc: Cyril has often thought of dismissing him only he is very sharp and a good writer I belive."

"Well Helen can you suggest any plan for me" asked Gladys "I cant marry James that is certain, but I cant go home and tell him that to his face can I?"

"Hardly" said Helen "if I were you I should go home, and dont say a word to Mr. Palsey, and write at once to your parents, telling them all you know as soon as you get a reply write and let me know and I will endeavour to come up and see you and we can arrange some plans; of course get Mr. Palsey out of the way before you ask me."

"Oh yes" said Gladys "that is easily done,

but mind you dont tell Mr. Sheene you have seen me today nor dont tell him you are coming to see me either."

"Oh no" replied Helen "I'll merely say I am going to Richmond for a trip, he does not know you live there."

"Then that is settled" replied Gladys with a sigh of relief "what time do you expect Mr. Sheene home?"

"Not till quite late" said Helen "you must stay to lunch."

"Thank you" said Gladys "I shall be delighted."

So Helen rang the bell and when Alice answered it she ordered dinner for two in a most bussiness like way.

Having made a good lunch, Gladys put on her things and got ready to start.

"You must not walk again" said Helen "I'll call a hansom," so saying she opened the front door and gave a soft whistle. In a minute a hansom drove up to the door and Helen helped her friend in.

"Goodbye Gladys" she said "dont forget to write and let me know directly you here from Norfolk and I'll come up if I can."

"No, I'll be sure to write" responded Gladys

"thank you so much Helen for all your kindness," and with a wave of her hand Gladys was driven rapidly away in the direction of Holburn Station, while Helen returned to the sitting room, a great weight lifted from her heart.

CHAPTER 23

CYRIL'S RETURN AND THE PROMISED VISIT

It was past ten before Cyril returned home very wet and cross into the bargin.

Helen saw at a glance what she might expect, so she carefully made up the fire and set a nice hot supper on the table.

"How tired you look dear" she said as she helped him off with his over coat.

"Well I suppose I do" replied Cyril crossly.

"Did you find your friend at home?" enquired Helen.

"Yes I did" said Cyril hastily pouring out his beer.

"Well that's all right" said Helen cheerily putting a lump of coal on the fire.

"No it's not all right" replied Cyril "for pity's sake leave that fire alone, I'm not going to sit up all night."

Helen smiled "have you a tooth ache dear" she asked.

"No I've not" said Cyril "look here Helen, have you seen a little card about the floor today?"

"Yes dear" replied Helen "a little Xmas card, that Mrs. Gingham sent you last year."

"Oh yes" said Cyril, trying to look as though that was what he meant "where did you put it?"

"In the desk dear" replied Helen producing a faded little card, which in an ordinary moment Cyril would have tossed into the fire, but now he carefully placed it in his note book.

"By the way Helen," said Cyril "I find I must go to Piccadilly again tomorrow as I did not get through my bussiness today, have breakfast at 8-30 will you?"

"Yes dear" replied Helen, and after saying goodnight to him, she put out the lamp, taking care to drop the pawn ticket, (which had been in her pocket all this time) on the hearth rug, where she had found it.

Helen slept very soundly indeed and she therefore was awake early. She got dressed quickly, and went down to the sitting room.

Pulling up the blind she glanced quickly round the room. The ticket still lay where she had dropped it; Cyril had evidently not been down.

By a quarter to 9 he made his appearance.

"Now Helen hurry up with the tea!" he cried "it is getting late."

"That's no fault of mine" replied Helen quietly "time will fly you know."

"Who said it would'nt?" asked Cyril snappishly, sitting down in the grumps.

"Why on earth does'nt Marshland send up the silver tea pot?" asked Helen artfully "I hate this old brown china concern; I'll ring for the other; and the sugar bowl too."

"No, no please dont," cried Cyril nervously "I really cant wait."

"Well if it is'nt sent up tonight I shall make a row about it" replied Helen crossly "I cant bear keeping the silver for special occasions."

Cyril did not notice the ticket so Helen went and picked it up, "what's this?" she asked curiously.

"What's what?" asked Cyril turning sharply round.

"This little card" said Helen.

"Oh that's mine" replied Cyril "I'll put it in my pocket if you give it here."

Helen handed it over, "it looks exactly like a pawn ticket does'nt it?" she asked.

"Yes, its not unlike one" replied Cyril.

"No not at all" said Helen, "in fact when I read it yesterday, I thought it was uncommonly like one."

Cyril turned a ghastly white and flew into the hall to get his hat.

"Ha ha my dear" thought Helen "I've found out your little game," but never the less she followed him innocently into the hall, "dear Cyril" she exclaimed "I hope my thinking that ticket like a pawn one has not upset you; of course it is awfully foolish of me I know."

"Yes I know it is" replied Cyril cooly, "I may say more than foolish."

Helen laughed "you wont be so late today I presume," she said.

"No I dont think so" said Cyril, "I may be home by three o'clock today."

"Very well" replied Helen "dont hurry on my account, and with a giggle she opened the door and watched Cyril safely down the street, "yes my boy" she thought I dare say I'm cleverer than you take me for, any how I know

where you're off to now and I wish you luck" and with a sigh Helen entered the office.

"Netherby" she cried "a word with you if you please."

The clerk shuffled quickly to his feet and followed Helen into the passage.

"Now look here" said Helen firmly "did Mr. Sheene ask if any ladies entered the office yesterday."

Netherby looked uneasily at the floor and kicked up the oil cloth.

"Speak up" cried Helen loudly, "and dont tear my carpets please."

"Well miss" said Netherby nervously "he did mention something of the kind last night."

"Oh he did, did he" screamed Helen "and what did you say?"

"Well miss I did'nt tell a story" said Netherby "I said not that I knew of because you see miss, I did'nt look to see if you let the lady in or not after I went into the office."

"Thank you Netherby" said Helen "you have done me a great service, "and she pressed a sovereign into the trembling hand of the clerk.

Entering the sitting room she found Alice waiting with a telegram in hand "its for you miss" she said "and the reply is prepaid."

Helen tore it open; it ran thus:

"Have heard from Norfolk, come directly.

GLADYS.

Seizing a pencil Helen wrote the following answer:

"Will try to come tomorrow.

Helen giving it to Alice she told her to take it at once.

"Poor Gladys" she thought, "I must manage to get to Richmond tomorrow what ever happens."

The morning passed and Cyril was home to lunch in very good spirits.

"Do you know Cyril" said Helen "I've often longed to go to Richmond for a trip, it must be such a nice place."

"Have you dear?" said Cyril, "well I must endevour to take you one day."

"Could you take me tomorrow?" asked Helen knowing he had an engagement on that day.

"No, not tomorrow" said Cyril "why?"

"Well there is a special matinee I wanted to see" said Helen "I promise you I'd be back by 8 in the evening."

"All right" said Cyril "you may go if you wish it; be back early you know "here's the money for your seat."

"Oh thank you" cried Helen "this is jolly I shall have a rare time I expect. I shall go there by the 9-12. You know and have a whole day of it."

"Very well" replied Cyril with a laugh, and kissing him soundly Helen ran upstairs to dream happily over the coming event.

CHAPTER 24

HELENS HAPPY DAY

THE sun was streaming in at Helen's little window, when she opened her eyes at 7.45 the following morning. Jumping out of bed with a happy feeling about her Helen lifted the lower sash of her window and lent out as far as possible. The October morning air blew chill against her lightly clad figure but the sun was high in the Heavens and with a sigh of relief she closed her casement and began to get dressed.

"Let's see" she said opening her ward-robe and taking a view of the costumes therein

"I'll put on my best dress if Marshland has mended the skirt" and so saying Helen shook out a pretty tweed dress trimmed with a deep pointed collar of scarlet velvit and cuffs to match and proceeded to button it on herself.

Here she was interupted by a loud knocking at the door and Alice thrust her head in saying "If you please miss, Mr. Sheene says he dont know what train you're a-going to Richmond by because its going on for 9 and the breakfast is almost cold."

"Oh dear" cried Helen hastily pinning on her hat, "I'll be down directly; what a time I've been dressing" she added. Seizing her gloves, umbrella, and little gold bracelet, she dashed downstairs and into the sitting room where a cold unpleasant breakfast greeted her, but Cyril was in a very good temper and that was just what was wanted, thought Helen as she gulped down her cold tea.

"Here" cried Cyril tossing her a sovereign on the table, "that's a little contribution towards your pleasure trip."

"Oh thanks Cyril" cried Helen joyfully "but do you mind dear if I dont go to the theatre; I have thought it over and I think I'll walk about the town, go to the terrace gardens, see

the churches, and perhaps go on the river if it is fine, or if not go for a drive."

"Allright" replied Cyril carelessly "I think you're much wiser myself, I always thought it was silly to go to the theatre; if you go to the town for a day you naturally wish to see it thoroughly, as of course it is'nt a place you're ever likely to go to again.

"Exactly" replied Helen with a smile, "now Cyril I'm off; when do you start for Picadilly?"

"Not till 10.30" replied Cyril, "now hurry up or you'll be late; be back by eight wont you" and he strode to the front door with her, where a hansom stood waiting.

"Goodbye" cried Helen waving her hand to him: "Goodbye" replied Cyril "I'm so glad you're going to have a happy day" And as she drove off, Cyril thought what a bright pretty little blossom she looked with her bright eyes and rosy cheeks, compared to many of the ugly looking men who adorned the boxes of the London cabs.

PART II

CHAPTER 25

A CRISIS

To do Cyril justice, it will be only fair to say that he experienced no slight pang at parting with his pretty little future wife for one day only, for, cruel and hardened as he had become, he had a deep and undying love for Helen in the bottom of his heart.

"What a dear she is," he muttered to himself, as the hansom disappeared round the corner, "and what a beast I am; I've deceived her all these months and I am still doing so. If it hadn't been for that villain Palsey, I'd have told her long ago, but now I can't, it's too late—too late," and thus making himself miserable and uneasy, Cyril entered his office to give the customary orders, and then prepared to walk to Picadilly.

Leaving Cyril, we must now follow Helen to Holburn station. The train was in as she reached the station, and she had a rush for

it; but she succeeded in securing a fairly comfortable seat in a third class carriage with only three people in it besides herself.

Having made some notes in her pocket book, she proceeded to read "Pearson's Weekly," and soon became engrossed in its contents. By the time the train stopped at Richmond, the carriage was empty, and Helen was loth to leave her comfortable seat. Seizing her umbrella, she jumped blithely on to the platform, and glanced quickly at every passenger. No, Gladys had certainly not come to meet her. Giving up her ticket, she found herself on the open platform, and ordering a cab, she got in, telling the man to drive to number 8, Down Terrace. She then lent back, determined to enjoy everything that came under her notice. "It seems a big place" she said, as she drove through the crowded High Street of Richmond, halting every now and then to let a dust cart or some other vehicle pass over them.

At last the Terrace Gardens came in view and Helen knew it would not be long before the cab stopped.

She was right; just then it stopped in front of a row of large well built houses and having

paid her fare Helen ran up the steps and rang the bell.

It was answered by a stout middle aged woman.

In reply to Helen's enquiry she replied in hearty tones "Oh yes miss, Miss Lincarrol is in right enough, she's been expecting you all the morning almost.

Mrs. Norton had hardly uttered her statement, when Gladys herself came flying downstairs and in a minute she had her arms round Helen's neck and was hugging and kissing her to death.

"Oh Helen," she cried "how kind of you to come so soon, you dont know what a lot I have to tell you."

"I am quite sure you have dear" answered Helen "I was delighted to be able to come with out any bother"

"Did'nt Mr. Sheene mind?" enquired Gladys leading Helen up the richly carpeted staircase." Oh not at all answered Helen brightly he seemed quite pleased for me to have a holiday, and he gave me this" she added holding up a bright gold piece.

At this juncture they arrived at Gladys's bedroom, and drawing back a red plush cur-

tain they emerged into a dainty little bedroom furnished entirely in sea green and bamboo.

"Oh! what a charming room" gasped Helen thinking of her own plain room at home compared to this perfect little paradise.

"Yes it is rather pretty" replied Gladys indifferently. all my rooms are on this landing you know!

"How many have you?" asked Helen in suprise. "My sitting room is opposite this, and there is a dear little conservatory opening out of it in which I keep all my pet plants" replied Gladys "I think that is quite enough for one girl dont you?"

"Quite" responded Helen "but where does Mr. Palsey sleep if you don't mind me asking."

"Oh James has his appartments on the floor above this" said Gladys "now do take off your hat, and come and chat in my cosy corner" and she pointed to the richly cushioned seat as she spoke.

Helen lay back in the seat and putting her hands behind her head she gazed wistfully round the room.

"Well Helen" laughed Gladys "are you longing to see my other rooms?"

"Oh no" replied Helen sadly, "this is quite

lovely enough thank you, but Gladys darling do pray tell me what your parents said in the letter."

"Oh yes" said Gladys, and jumping up she opened a handsome little morocoo writing desk and took from it a sheet of writing paper closely written.

"This is it" she said sadly "I'll read it to you Helen, it makes me so miserable."

Helen listened attentively while Gladys read in a most plaintive voice the following letter:

"Speerin House
Endup Road,
Norwich.

MY DEAR GLADYS, Oct. 17th.

As may be imagined your foolish letter caused both your father and I great displeasure. We both consider your suspicions concerning James Palsey totally unfounded, and from what you say we think our niece Helen Winston must be a very foolish girl to put such notions into your head. Of course we pity her very much, as no doubt it is very sad to have one's father murdered, but to tell you the truth we think she must be a little off her head. (Violent exclamations from Helen). Refer-

ring to your letter again I see that you are determined not to Marry James. Now Gladys you must see for yourself how very nonsensical this idea is. James has every means of making you happy and what is more he is very very rich and is by no means stingy with his money, as proof the lodgings you are now in. I am sure he loves you very passionately and he is both truthful and honourable; (sarcastic smiles from both Helen and Gladys), and what is the use of forsaking this good man, whom you know and ourght to love, for some horrible scrapegrace whom you choose to consider faithful? Think over what I have said to you and try and change your mind as regards James. If you resolve to marry him your father and I are quite willing for it to take place at once; if however you persist in this obstinate behaviour, remember you are cut off from our wills and we will not have you in our house, neither will we receive any letters from you. We are not ones to encourage foolish suspicions, and are quite in favour of James. You may write again and tell us what you intend doing.

Yours affectionate Mother,

ETHELREDA LINCARROL

P. S. We think the less you associate with Helen Winston the better. Your sisters and brothers are very upset and sincerely hope you will marry dear James."

"A most impertinant letter" cried Helen with burning cheeks and flaming eyes, "I had no idea my aunt was such a cruel, wicked person; I suppose she is in league with *him,*" and she pointed in the direction she thought most likely Mr. Palsey had taken.

"Oh hush Helen" said Gladys "you really have no right to speak like that!"

"Yes I have" stormed Helen, "she dares to say I'm off my head; it is far more likely she is off hers."

"Helen!" cried Gladys "I really wont allow you to say such things about my mother, it is most rude of you."

"I dont care" replied Helen "if I am to be privately insulted in this way I declare I wont stand it, I have surely had enough trouble without this—this——"

Whatever Helen intended to say she got no further, for she quite lost her self-control and burst out crying, her hot tears falling through her fingers and dropping on to her patent

leather shoes. Poor Helen! it was indeed sad to have all the miseries of her past life recalled by a few thoughtless words expressed in a letter.

Gladys who was sympathy itself, jumped up and ran to Helen's side.

Putting her arms round her neck she kissed her, saying as she did so "never mind Helen dear, dont cry, I should not have hurt your feelings so, but cheer up and I'll tell you some news which will show you that we have *some* friends, who are not on Mr. Palsey's side."

Helen, who quickly got over her fits of sorrow dried her eyes and looked up.

"What is it?" she asked.

Gladys sat down again and opening her mother's letter said "you know what Mother says in the post-script, about my sisters and brothers being very upset and longing for me to marry James?"

"Yes" answered Helen, "but how many have you got, I understood you were a very small family?"

"Oh no, we are rather a large family" responded Gladys, "perhaps I had better tell you our names or you wont understand the news."

"Yes please do" pleaded Helen.

"Well I have three brothers and three sisters," said Gladys, "Lionel is the eldest of the family, he's about 25 or 26 I think, then there is Wilelmina, we always call her Minna, she is 24, then Lawrence is about 23 I fancy. I am the next, and I suppose you know I have just come of age. Ethel and Elsie (the twins) are just 19, and Hugh is the youngest, he is between 17 and 18."

"You all seem to have very fanciful names" said Helen.

"Do we?" said Gladys "well Mother is just that kind you know, her name being Ethelreda Aurora, I suppose she thinks we ought to have fancy names."

"Yes I suppose so" replied Helen, "I certainly think you have sweet names, Ethel and Elsie are very nice for twins, are they pretty?"

"Ethel and Elsie?" asked Gladys "oh yes fairly so they are both fair you know."

"You must be a fair family" replied Helen "You are fair yourself."

"Oh no we're not" answered Gladys, "Minna is like a gipsy almost and the boys are all dark."

"Really?" said Helen "well Gladys what about this wonderful piece of news?"

"Oh yes" said Gladys, "well when Mother wrote that postscript, I dont believe she asked the others about it at all, because only the other evening, I got a letter from Lawrence, (he is my favourite) and it seems he is quite in favour of me *not* marrying James."

"How lovely!" exclaimed Helen.

"I'll try and find the letter" said Gladys "it really is awfully nice, he says he never liked the looks of James and he quite believes my suspicions are right and he says he'll try and find out who murdered Mr. Winston if he can, and he strongly advises me to mary Lord Beaufort, (a friend of ours who has a regard for me). He also says that he will try and come to see me, Minna is very much of his oppinion too it seems, but I think that is because *she* has her eye on James. The twins have not much to say in the matter except they think I am silly to miss such a chance, Lionel says so too, but then he is very high and mighty, you know, so of course he wants me to marry some one rich."

"Well I dont see much good in looking for the letter now you have told me all the news" said Helen laughingly, as Gladys having

turned her desk up side down, was rampaging about the bookcase.

"I suppose its not much good" replied Gladys wearily, "well now Helen the question I want you to settle is this; what am I to write and tell Mother, and when am I to expect Lawrence?

"Well my dear, as regards the latter question I am quite ignorant" said Helen "your brother may turn up today for all I know."

"How jolly if he does" replied Gladys "it will be very awkward if James is at home, because if ever a man knew how to make himself disagreable James is that person."

"Is he really?" exclaimed Helen "well I hope Lawrence will come today if that is the case, but now Gladys to business, you must write to your mother you know, and have you decided what you will say?"

"Yes I have" said Gladys bravely "I will write at once and say that my suspicions are none the less keen, and on no plea whatever will I marry James."

"Gladys, you are good!" cried Helen, while her friend's lips trembled and her eyes filled with tears, "but never mind dear" she added "you will be well rewarded one day, when you

find yourself the happy wife of a good man, he may be rich too, because it is not always the bad that are rich."

"I know" answered Gladys "and now Helen there is just time before lunch for me to write my letter."

Arranging her writing table, Gladys sat down and wrote the following letter:

8, Down Terrace,
Richmond.
Oct. 17th.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

No words can express how sorry I am that my letter should have caused you and father so much trouble. My suspicions however have in no way diminished. James is as bad as ever. He has a horrible sneaking way of coming upstairs and he dreams too and shouts out "oh why did I do it; murder! robbery." So tonight I shall tell him that I have found him out and could not possibly marry him. Of course he will have nothing to do with me and I shall be penniless, but as *you* will have no more to say to me, I suppose I am welcome to fall back upon the kindness of my dearly beloved friend Helen Winston. Now dear Mother, as this is the last letter I shall ever

write you, I beg that you will give my very best love to dear Father and all the rest, Remember me very kindly to all my friends especially Lord Beaufort. Begging heartily for your forgiveness (which I suppose you will never grant me)

I remain, your devoted daughter

Gladys.

Having finished this epistle Gladys stamped and sealed it and handing it to Helen said: "You will post this on your way home wont you?"

"Oh yes" said Helen and she placed the envelope in her pocket.

"Now the next best thing to be done is, to go and see if lunch is ready exclaimed Gladys and leading the way, the two girls crossed the passage and entered a charming little drawing room. A fire burnt brightly in the grate and a table was spread in the middle of the room, on which a hot pheasant was waiting to be carved.

"Is this a drawing room or a dining room" enquired Helen, looking at the pretty pictures, the sofa and various drawing room articles.

"Both" replied Gladys "you see after meals,

the flaps of this table are let down, an Indian silk cloth put upon it, and it is a sweet little table for the centre of a drawingroom,

"How dodgy" cried Helen in delight. Lunch was soon over and the girls repaired to Gladys's bedroom, which was brighter and sunnier than the drawing-room. Taking their seats by the window, they both sank into silence.

Gladys was the first to break it.

"Helen" she said "when James comes home tonight, I shall tell him exactly what I think about this matter; and if he turns me out of the house, where can I go?"

"Dont despair" said Helen "your brother may arrive before that.

"Oh" said Gladys scornfully "its not likely; I must say Helen you are very unsympathetic, perhaps if you were living with the prospect of spending a night with no roof over your head, you would be nicer to me"

"I am not nasty" returned Helen; if such a thing does happen that you dont know where to go, why you can come to me, you know you will be welcome; you see Gladys I've had so much trouble myself, that I find it easy to be calm during other peoples misery."

"Well it appears you do" replied Gladys, "but anyhow you will surely help me pack my things, for if James turns me away I shall be quite ready to start."

"Oh certainly" said Helen, and accordingly the next hour and a half was spent in turning out Gladys's wardrobes etc. and by the time the trunks were locked and the room set tidy, it was nearly tea-time.

Mrs. Norton (the Landlady brought some buttered toast and tea into the bedroom, as it was more comfortable than the sitting room.

"Oh dear it has commenced to rain" cried Gladys, and walking to the window she drew back the pretty muslin curtain.

Helen followed and the two girls stood for a moment looking out of the window, through which a few rain-drops were splashing on to the thick Turkish carpet.

Helens eyes wandered listlessly across the terrace gardens, but she did not take in the scene before her, as she gazed intently at the lively throng before her, her thoughts were far away in the dingy little home-office, and she was wondering if Cyril would permit Gladys to dwell under his roof.

All of a sudden Gladys clutched hold of

Helen's arm, and pointed to a figure in the street, which was coming quickly up the steps of the house.

"Oh Helen he has come!" she cried "quick, quick we must come down stairs!"

The two girls rushed to the door, but ere they had time to take a dozen steps, they were met at the top of the stairs by *Mr. Palsey.*

Helen's cheeks and lips grew white as a sheet, and she crept behind the welcome shade of Gladys's back, as the gaze of the man she hated fell upon her.

"What is the meaning of this?" hissed Mr. Palsey between his teeth.

"The meaning of what?" enquired Gladys in a trembling voice.

"This—this—most un-called-for visit?" cried Mr. Palsey pointing to where Helen stood trembling like a leaf in every limb.

"It means" cried Gladys in a loud tone, "that I know all Mr. James Palsey, all your false deceitful ways, all your cruel treatment of my cousin Helen and above all the murder of her father, and the robbery of the safe!"

Mr. Palsey grew livid with fury and fear, and clung for support to the bannisters.

"Oh you know all that do you?" he en-

quired sardonically, "For once your imaginations have gone too far Miss Gladys Lincarrol, I did not murder Mr. Winston as it happens, perhaps his daughter can throw light on that subject."

"What do you mean?" cried Helen fiercely.

"What I say" replied Mr. Palsey.

"If you mean to infer Mr Palsey "that Cyrill has had anything to do with the murder you are wrong, he is far too honourable for that."

"Of course he is" said Mr. Palsey sarcastically.

"Then dont talk about what you dont know anything about" retorted Helen.

Mr. Palsey was about to reply, when Gladys interupted him, "well it is of no use to prolong matters James" she said "so I'll tell you straight what I mean; of course I shall not dream of becoming your wife after what I have discovered about you, and so I am going away; my parents will not have me at home, so I am going back with Helen Winston, till my brother Lawrence comes to fetch me, he will no doubt set me up comfortably and then I shall at least be free from your clutches, even if I am forced into marrying a poor man.

Mr. Palsey turned an ashy grey and his cruel green eyes gleamed viciously "What?" he gasped "you say you're going away, going to leave the man who has never been anything but loving to you; I tell you, you shant do it, you young cat——" and seizing hold of Gladys's slender wrists he tried to force her back into the bedroom.

Helen uttered a cry and with a blind idea of doing some good, she flung herself across Mr. Palsey's arms. Seeing his chance Mr. Palsey thrust Helen aside and tightning his grip on Gladys pinioned her to the wall, vio lently shaking her by the shoulders every time she opened her lips to speak.

At this critical moment, a loud ring was heard at the door quickly followed by voices in the hall below, the next moment steps were heard hastily ascending the stairs. Before anyone could speak, Mr. Palsey felt himself violently punched in the back, and Gladys recovering herself in a moment sank sobbing into the arms of *her brother.*

Lawrence Lincarrol was a tall, broad shouldered young man about 6 ft 2 inches. His hair was dark, rather curly and plentiful and was parted at the side. He had dark blue

eyes a dark moustache and great regularity of features, but there was no resemblance to Gladys in his face whatever. In age, our hero was about three and twenty.

Having embraced his sister and shaken hands with Helen Lawrence turned his attention to Mr. Palsey who was shivering in the back-ground.

"Well!" he cried, after scanning the villian from head to foot, "this is nice conduct I must say; may I ask what you were doing with my sister when I came in?"

"Oh I was merely advising her to keep out of draughts," replied Mr. Palsey glaring at the newcomer with hatred in his eyes.

"A most extraordinary way of giving your advice" replied Lawrence, "you were shaking her as if she was an animal."

"She is obstinate" persisted Mr. Palsey.

"Don't talk nonsense" cried Lawrence hotly, "a man who can contrive murders and robberies as well as you can, should be able to give a reasonable answer to a simple question, tell me at once, why you were shaking my sister in that horrible manner."

"If you think you can master me Mr. Lincarrol" said Mr. Palsey, "you will soon find

your mistake, stand out of my way or we shall come to blows."

Lawrence did not move an inch, and Gladys and Helen waited with beating hearts, to see what would follow.

Mr. Palsey's evil nature was roused in a moment with a cow-like jump, and with the fury of a lion, he sprang upon Lawrence, dealing him a terrible blow between the eyes.

But in his rage Mr. Palsey had forgotten how much weaker and smaller he was than his combatant.

With wonderful coolness, Lawrence siezed Mr. Palsey by the shoulders and after a brief struggle, succeeded in forcing him backwards into the drawing room where he locked the door and slipping the key into his pocket.

"I did not wish to fight on a lodging house landing," he said turning to the girls "it might get talked about, Mr. Palsey will have time to grow cool locked in there for a little, I'll let him out soon."

"Yes, dont forget" said Gladys "Mrs. Norton will think it so strange."

"Well Gladys" said Helen "I really must go now; Cyril will be expecting me, and now

that your brother has come you will be quite safe."

"Oh Helen!" cried Gladys "you cant go yet, Lawrence what are we to do?"

"I was going to tell you" replied Lawrence. "Lord Beaufort is living in London now, 26 Portman Square, and as he knows I am here too, he wants me to bring you Gladys to stay with him. I shall be there for a few days longer before I go home, but I dare say you and Lord Beaufort will have arranged matters by then.

Gladys blushed hard and pretended not to hear.

"We can all go to Holburn together by the next train" proceeded Lawrence, "and then when we have seen Miss Winston safely into a cab, we can drive to Portman Sq. where Lord Beaufort will be ready to receive us."

It is very kind of you" said Helen "but I really feel very mean presuming upon you like this."

"Not at all" replied Lawrence "it is the least we could do; and now Gladys if you are ready, we ought to be starting."

"I shant be long" cried Gladys "I've only my things to put on, and my boxes to strap."

"Well then I'll just go and see about a fly" replied Lawrence, glancing at his watch as he spoke, "you be ready by the time I get back will you?"

"Oh yes" answered Gladys, and darting back into her bedroom she commenced to put on her hat and jacket while Helen wrote labels for the luggage.

In a few moments Lawrence returned and running upstairs knocked at the bedroom door.

"Oh come in" cried Gladys "I'm nearly ready."

"Do hurry we've not so very much time" replied Lawrence, dragging out a large black trunk and carrying it to the landing where a cab man was waiting to take it down stairs.

"Now, I'm ready" said Gladys, "come on Helen."

"I am coming" replied Helen and picking up her umbrella, she followed the others downstairs.

"Oh I say we must'nt forget Mr. Palsey" cried Lawrence "I can hear him muttering in there now, I expect he is awfully wild."

"I expect he is" laughed Gladys.

Lawrence produced the key from his pocket

and was about to slip it quietly into the lock, when Helen interupted him: "Mr. Lincarrol" she said "dont you think it would be safer to give the key to Mrs. Norton, because if Mr. Palsey hears you opening the door he would be sure to get out and then there might be another scene."

"So there might" replied Lawrence, "well I think that would be the best, come along Gladys, the sooner we get off the better."

"Let me out, let me out" screamed Mr. Palsey from within the drawing room, "I'll tell the police of it; let me out this instant."

"Have patience" shouted Lawrence, but his words were hardly audible for Mr. Palsey was releiving his feelings by kicking violently at the door.

"The hall door was open, and Mrs. Norton was standing by it waiting for her lodgers to come down.

"Well miss this is short notice" she began in an injured tone.

"I am very sorry" replied Gladys "but I have to leave in a great hurry, I would have let you know before had it been possible," and she handed a few soverigns to the land lady.

"By the by Mrs. Norton" began Lawrance

"here is the key of your drawing room, Mr. Palsey is in there for reasons which I dont see fit to mention now, but as I found him assaulting a lady when I arrived I shall see fit to inform the police and no doubt you will be kind enough to take charge of the key until my return."

"Oh yes sir" replied Mrs. Norton, who had no great devotion for that cross-grained Mr. Palsey as she called him "you can trust me fully."

"Thank you" replied Lawrence, noting down Mrs. Norton's name and address in his memoranda as he spoke.

A cab drew up at the door at that moment and the landlady and parlour maid both walked down the steps with their lodgers.

"Am I to expect you back at any particular time sir?" enquired Mrs. Norton.

"I cant say for certain" answered Lawrence, "but I will probably be back sometime tonight."

"Very well sir, I'll keep the key safe in my pocket till then" and Mrs. Norton slipped the key into its receptable.

"The old station" cried Lawrence and jumping into the cab he shut the door with a bang.

The journey passed off very successfully, Helen and Gladys both taking a doze in the train and waking up quite fresh at Holburn Station.

"I must go to the Police Station at once" said Lawrence "so I will see you both started first; what is your address Miss Winston?"

"I could easily walk" replied Helen blushing, "but if you would rather I drove the address is 132, Cannon Street."

Lawrence hailed two hansoms "now Gladys jump in as you have further to go" he said, "26, Portman Square" he added to the cabman, who touched his hat and drove off in an instant.

The second hansom was waiting and drew close up to the curb as the other drove off. "132, Cannon Street, shouted Lawrence, "goodbye Miss Winston, be sure and write to Gladys if you are in trouble, I am going there myself late tonight as unfortunately I must go back to Richmond to see about Mr. Palsey."

"Thank you very very much" replied Helen the tears gathering in her pretty eyes as she spoke. But she soon wiped them away and leaning back in the comfortable hansom she

commenced to hum a little tune as she arranged her ruffled hair at the little looking glass. Little did she dream how very soon she would have to avail herself of Lawrence's offer.

A dismal sleet had begun to fall and being tired Helen was not sorry when the hansom stopped at the dreary looking office. Lawrence had already paid the man so Helen had only to collect her parcels and get out.

A light was shining in the office room and also in Cyril's bed-room which was just above it.

"How very strange" thought Helen as she mounted the steps. Before she had time to lay her hand on the bell the door was violently opened from within and there stood Netherby, looking very pale and trembling from head to foot.

"Oh come in Miss, do come in" he cried in an agitated voice as Helen stood staring at his strange appearance.

"Why Netherby, what *is* the matter?" cried Helen entering the passage and closing the door behind her.

"Oh dont ask me miss, please dont let me be the first to tell you" cried Netherby and

the poor man clung for support to the door handle.

"Very well, dont distress yourself" said Helen kindly and calmly and seeing there was no more information to be got from him, she entered the office.

It seemed to be in a state of utter confusion; papers littered the whole room, Cyril's tea stood untouched by his desk, and Cyril's own private chest was wide open and Wilson the other clerk was cooly reading the papers and documents within. He glanced over his shoulder as Helen entered and with an insolent grin returned to the parchment in his hand.

All Helen's pride and dignity was roused in a moment.

"Wilson!" she cried with an impatient movement of her hands, but keeping perfectly cool the while "oblige me by telling me the meaning of this conduct."

"The explanation is there" replied the clerk pointing to a half sheet of paper lying on the desk.

It was a common bit of ruled paper and by the ragged edge had evidently been hastily torn from a note book; a pin was run through

the top of the paper showing it had been attached to something.

"Where did you find this" enquired Helen before reading it.

"We found it pinned to Mr. Sheene's desk addressed to you miss," replied Netherby who had entered the room, "it was Mrs. Marshland who told us to open it.

"Very well" said Helen, and she read as follows.

"Darling. When you see this I shall probably be miles away. This is written to bid you goodbye as it is not likely we shall meet again. When you read my story try and forgive me; for in spite of all I always loved you and ever will.

CYRIL SHEENE.

This strange epistle was hastily scrawled in pencil and the signature was very shaky, but Helen knew the writing in a minute, it was undoubtedly Cyril's.

"It is not likely we shall meet again!!"

The words ran through Helen's bewildered head and repeated themselves again and again. Cyril, whom she had loved so dearly and believed in so faithfully had gone away, left

her alone in the cruel heartless world; Cyril whom she had never even had course or reason to call dishonourable had written himself to ask her to try and forgive him. What did it mean? And the story, where was the story?" The room seemed to swim round;" we shall not meet again, "try and forgive me" The story where is the story? And then all was darkness and Helen remembered no more.

CHAPTER 26

A REMOVAL TO PORTMAN SQUARE

WHEN Helen recovered she found herself lying in a large comfortable bed propped up with pillows. The room was large, cheerful and beautifully furnished. A small table covered with a white cloth was by the bedside with medicine bottles upon it. A bright fire burnt in the grate. The blinds were down and warm red curtains pulled across the large bow window.

A small lamp was carefully placed where no light or glare could reach the bed and the very atmosphere of the room spoke of extreme comfort.

A nurse, in a white cap and apron was gliding noislessly about the room arranging things here and there.

For a moment Helen lay quite still staring about her plerpexedly, but on making a slight movement in the bed the nurse turned round, "So you are awake at last miss?" she said in a slow gentle voice, "do you know you have slept quite quietly for three hours."

"Where are am I?" asked Helen gazing from the kind face of the nurse around the strange room.

"You are in Lord Beaufort's house in Portman Square" replied the nurse.

"Lord Beaufort?" repeated Helen, "I have heard the name before."

"Yes you have" said the nurse, "Miss Lincarrol is here you know, and her brother, and your old servant Mrs. Marshland, so you see no one has deserted you."

"Except Cyril" sighed Helen.

"You must not think of that now" replied the nurse soothingly, "all you have to do is rest and keep quiet; I expect Miss Lincarrol will be up soon, she has come twice already only you were asleep, now take your medicine

and then lay quiet; you will hear all the story soon from other lips than mine."

Thus reassured Helen took her cooling draught and lay down, patiently awaiting any visitor who would enlighten her as to past events. Her thoughts naturally enough wandered back to the episode of Cyril's departure and she was getting extremely restless, much to the nurse's dismay, when the door softly opened and Gladys appeared in the room.

With a smile she instantly ran to the bedside and Helen tried to raise herself to greet her friend, but her head instantly swam round and she fell back on the pillow, white and gasping. The nurse gave her a dose of medicine and she quickly came to herself again.

"You must not try to exert yourself too much" said the nurse kindly, "it will do you no good, and will only hinder your recovery."

"Very well" said Helen faintly, "but how is it I get so queer?"

"Because your head is in a weak state" replied the nurse, "and it will probable injure you very much to rampage."

It would take too long to relate the history of Helen's illness as Helen heard it from Gladys's lips, with all the details and exager-

tions, so we will go back a little bit and see what happened after Helen swooned away.

CHAPTER 27

THE CONTENTS OF THE CHEST

As soon as Netherby (the clerk) saw what had happened he at once called for Marshland, who was sitting in the parlour in a state of utter collapse. On hearing that her precious Miss Helen had fainted, the good old woman ran at once to the office room.

Helen lay perfectly white and still upon the floor with Cyril's fatal letter clenched in her hand. Marshland instantly knelt down and placed her head at Helen's heart. "She is not dead" she cried triumphantly.

"What can we do?" asked Netherby in a shaky voice.

"I'll tell you" said Marshland getting up off the floor, you must take a cab and drive as fast as you can to Portman Square number 26, Miss Lincarrol is staying there with Lord Beaufort and I think her brother too; they are all staunch friends of Miss Helen's I know they will come at once, we can make no move,

friendless as we are, without the help of Mr. Lincarrol or some one."

"Stop a bit" cried Netherby regaining his courage all of a sudden; something tells me the story Mr. Sheene speaks of in his letter is somewhere in the private chest, and as it is evidently meant for Miss Winston's private reading, I'll trouble you Mr. Wilson to let those papers alone and give me up the key."

"What right have you to the key any more than me?" asked Wilson sullenly.

"None I suppose" replied Netherby "but I know that you are subjecting yourself to the penalty of the law by ransacking that private chest, "I shall inform the police if you dont instantly deliver the key."

Netherby's altered manner rather cowed Wilson so very sulkily he gave up the key.

Then with a set determination Netherby collected all the papers etc: which Wilson had strewn over the desks tying them firmly together placed them back in the chest.

"Have you any more?" asked he before locking the chest.

"No" stoutly declared Mr. Wilson.

"I'm not so eager to belive you" replied Netherby.

"Why not?" enquired Wilson savagely.

"Because you're not extra fond of the truth" replied Netherby "and I'd rather satisfy myself that you have no more papers about you before I lock the chest."

"You'd better dare lay a finger on me" hissed Wilson.

"I dont want to" replied Netherby "but if you really have taken nothing, what is your objection to letting me see the contents of your pocket?"

"Oh I'll let you see the contents drawled Wilson and he proceeded to place a few articles on the desk.

Netherby was beginning to satisfy himself it was alright, when he noticed Wilson shuffling about with the inner pocket of his coat.

"Hurry up" exclaimed Netherby impatiently.

"Alright" cried Wilson nervously drawing out a rather dirty handkerchief; but fate was against him and with the handkerchief came a roll of bank notes.

Marshland gave a cry as she beheld the sight of the unhappy Wilson slink into a corner.

Netherby collected the notes placed them in

the desk and without a word put on his hat and went out. In less that five minutes he returned accompanied by two policemen, who on a sign from Netherby advanced to Wilson and before the astonished man could say a word he found himself handcuffed and carefully guarded by the two officials.

Netherby and Marshland then gave an exact account of what had taken place and Netherby ended by saying "you see Wilson if you had shut the chest when I told you and concealed nothing I should have been the last to call the police, but when it came to robbing the chest in justice to Miss Winston I had to do my duty."

Wilson was too utterly dazed to say a word, and in a few moments Netherby, not liking to leave the house sent a messenger to portman Square.

In a couple of hours a cab drew up at the door, and out got Lawrence Lincarrol, Lord Beaufort, and a short thin man, who turned out to be Cyril Sheene's solicitor.

On hearing the story, Lord Beaufort said that Helen was to be taken at once to his house and that Marshland should accompany her. Accordingly the unconscious girl was

lifted into the brougham and accompanied by the old servant drove off. "Your things shall be sent on" said Lord Beaufort to Marshland as he helped her into the cab "and a trained nurse shall be got for Miss Winston, meanwhile my servants quite understand what is to be done."

Then the cab drove off and Lord Beaufort entered the office.

Lawrence and Mr. Spriggs (the solicitor) were both busy interviewing Netherby, who now that he had done his duty and shown much good sence had relapsed into his old nervous state.

We had here better describe Lord Beaufort and Mr. Spriggs.

Lord Beaufort was a half Spaniard, his mother being of that nationality and his father (who was dead) an Englishman.

He took after his mother in looks. He was moderately tall and thin and might have been eight and thirty. He had straight black hair and beard and moustache, to match, the former being small and well cut, not the bushy kind. His handsome dark eyes were quite those of a foreigner and his teeth were beautifully

white. He was particularly well dressed and even to his boots.

Very different indeed was Mr. Spriggs. A thin wiry little man about 5 feet 2 inches, with thin sandy coloured hair (a trifle bald), twinkly little blue eyes, a very pink face and carroty coloured moustache. He was attired in a rough tweed suit with knickaboccers, a turn down collar, very untidily put on, thick grey stockings, clumping boots, a green tie, and a dear stalker cap drawn well on to his head.

"Well the first thing to be done" said Mr. Spriggs in jerky tones "is to open the chest, and I being the solicitor will proceed to do it," and he stalked accross the room with a very high and mighty air and made a great commotion with the keys.

The chest being opened the contents were carefully examined. A blue envelope was first opened and contained the following information.

"This is to say that I, Cyril Sheene leave all my money, which is all in bank notes to my intended Helen Winston; it is not very much and does not exceed £150 but still I

hope it will do as I can't afford any more. Dated August 11th."

This was all written in violet coloured ink by Cyril himself; but at the bottom of the paper a few lines were hastily scrawled in pencil.

"I hereby add that all my share of the money I stole from Mr. John Winston is in the black leather bag at the back of the chest. Helen will recognise the bag. Not a farthing has been spent and it is all to go to Helen. Dated October 14.

"That was written on the day of Mr. Sheene's departure announced Mr. Spriggs as he replaced the paper in its envelope, and this is the bag I suppose," he added dragging at a black leather bundle in a remote corner of the chest.

The bag it certainly was and on being opened £100 in ready gold tumbled on to the desk, and with it a slip of paper on which the reader will remember John Winston had written, "all this gold is bequeathed to my daughter Helen on the day when I shall be called upon to die," and was sealed with the writer's prifate seal.

Nothing else of great importance appeared

except a bundle of white manuscript carefully tied up and sealed, addressed to Helen and marked "private."

"I know what that is!" cried Netherby excitedly "it is the story Mr. Sheene wrote about, look here sir" and he picked up Cyril's letter which had dropped from Helen's hand when she was lifted into the cab.

Mr. Spriggs carefully read the letter and placed it in the chest, "ah yes" he said addressing Lord Beaufort and Lawrence, "that story is evidently for Miss Winston's private eye, so it must be locked up till she is able to read it."

"Which wont be for a good while judging from her present condition," said Lawrence, "but now to business, what about this office, it is a difficult matter to carry it on without Mr. Sheene."

"As far as I can see, it must be kept on till Miss Winston's recovery" replied Mr. Spriggs "if no more news is heard of Mr. Sheene till then well Miss Winston can come and procure her money and various other papers which will of course be hers and then this place can be sold."

"Yes" said Lord Beaufort and I suppose

Mr. Netherby will be the head man till then.

"Well yes" replied Mr. Spriggs "he must certainly be here to look after the place, and of course I shall look in occasionally to see all goes well; another young man can be got to be under Mr. Netherby as Mr. Wilson has gone to prison for attempted robbery; do you agree to that Mr. Netherby?"

"Oh yes sir" eagerly replied the clerk, who would not have disagreed for the world.

"And if it comes to the place being sold" added Lord Beaufort "you can come to me Mr. Netherby, I may have arranged something by then"

"Thank you very much sir" replied Netherby and after a few more matters had been arranged the three men left the office leaving Netherby in charge.

By the time Lord Beaufort and Lawrence got back home, a doctor had seen Helen. He said that when she recovered her senses, perfect rest and quiet would be all she needed, her brain being in a dazed condition. She would not be able to leave her bed for some time probably though nothing serious was the matter.

Helen remained unconscious all night and

next day she was very delirious but towards 4 o'clock she dropped asleep and woke up about seven o'clock, her right senses returned to her, but still in a weak condition.

CHAPTER 28

THE PROPOSAL

It was not untill the evening after Helen's recovery that Lawrence and Lord Beaufort had an oppertunity of conversing together.

Mulberry Beaufort was seated in his luxurious study partaking of some Burgundy wine and reading a detective story, when the door opened and Lawrence, entered, tired after a long day in the city.

"Well Mulberry" he said throwing himself down in an arm chair and lighting a cigar, "no news of Sheene in the Star I suppose?"

"Not a word" replied Mulberry, "it is a most misterious affair altogether."

"Yes the odd part of it is that Palsey has made off too" answered Lawrence.

"You dont mean that!" cried Mulberry.

"Yes I do" said Lawrence, "it appears the villain got off while I was away; you know

I locked him in the drawing room and as the landlady had the key he would not have made his exit in that way.

"No" replied Mulberry "he certainly could not but you forget the window."

"No I dont" responded Lawrence, "that is just where he did get out, for when I opened the door of the drawing room, the window was wide open at the bottom, and a bit of rope was fastenned to a hook on the window ledge and hanging out of the window, so the wreatch made his escape that way; it is a wonder he was not detected for the police are every where on the look out for him and I am sure if ever a man deserved the gallows he does."

"Yes indeed" replied Mulberry lazily puffing at his cigar "but in my opinion the disappearance of Sheene is the most extraordinary it was so very sudden and unexpected, but it was not at all an unlikely thing for Palsey to do, he was so angry at being locked in."

"My idea is" answered Lawrence "that they both had their own reasons for wishing to leave so abruptly. I shouldnt be at all supprised if the villian Palsey knowing the police were on his track, dropped some hint as to

Sheene's share in the murder and so got the blame partly shifted from himself."

"Then you think Sheene did share in the murder do you?" asked Mulberry, his black eyes flashing.

"I do" replied Lawrence, "I bet you a shilling that story of Sheene's will reveal everything. It strikes me Sheene made off on account of the police too——"

"Well I only hope Miss Winston will soon be well enough to read the story" replied Mulberry.

"I hope so too responded Lawrence heartily.

"I suppose Netherby still stays at the office?" enquired Mulberry.

"Oh yes" answered Lawrence, "but it will be a good thing for him as soon as he can leave, he gets very little pay and he is really a very good fellow indeed."

"Yes he is" rejoined Mulberry "I will try and get something for him as soon as possible."

Just then the door opened and in came Gladys looking very pretty in her evening dress of rose coloured silk.

She blushed on seeing the two men, but came forward gracefully enough.

"I came to see if you were coming into the drawing room" she said "dinner will soon be ready and I have just been to see Helen."

"Oh how is she?" asked Lawrence.

"Better I think" replied Gladys "I am going up again after dinner."

"Well I will come to the drawing room" said Mulberry putting aside his tumbler.

"Will you come too Lawrence?"

"Not yet thanks" replied Lawrence "I have a letter to write, I will join you at dinner"

"We expect a few guests tonight" said Mulberry.

"Oh" said Lawrence "I'll change presently."

Mulberry opened the door and he and Gladys betook themselves from the study.

Alone in the beautiful drawing room with the light from the tall standing lamp falling on her fair features, Mulberry Beaufort became entranced with Gladys's beauty.

He stood gazing into her lovely blue eyes with his own black ones, till he could contain himself no longer.

"Gladys darling" he exclaimed passionately seizing her small white hand "I love you."

Gladys blushed and tried to hide her face

but Mulberry caught her other hand and kept his eyes full on her.

"Answer me Gladys" cried the lover "I love you so much and if you will only be my wife my happiness will be complete."

"Oh Lord Beaufort" cried Gladys "this is so unexpected."

"Call me Mulberry!" he almost whispered.

"Well Mulberry" murmured Gladys "I really dont know what to say."

"Think darling" cried Mulberry, "surely you dont wish to crush all hope and happiness out of my life, my heart beats only for you Gladys, you dont wish to stop it do you?"

"Oh no" earnestly replied Gladys.

"Then may I take that as your acceptation of me?" enquired Mulberry.

"I think you may" replied Gladys softly.

Mulberry was too overpowered with joy to say a word, he merely clasped her in his arms and drew her head on to his shoulder, where it lay in a state of bliss for the space of three minutes.

At length she slowly raised it and Mulberry taking one of her hands pressed it tight saying, "then darling, we may consider ourselves engaged?"

"Yes Mulberry!" murmered Gladys.

"Then dear accept this as a token" said Mulberry and as he spoke he slipped a handsome diamond and saphire ring on her finger.

She had scarcely recovered her astonishment and pleasure when the butler entered announcing Mr. and Mrs. Vermont.

CHAPTER 29

THE DINNER PARTY

THE Hon: Mr. and Mrs. Vermont were only the first of great numbers who flocked to Lord Beaufort's house that evening. By the time the dinner gong sounded the large drawing room was filled with ladies and gentlemen many of whom had brought instruments to play, as Mulberry intended it to be a musical evening.

Mulberry eyed Gladys lovingly as he gave his arm to Mrs. Murry and escorted her to the dining room.

The dinner table was a sight to behold!

Pink was the colour chosen for the evening.

The daintily arranged menus were set in white porcelain frames on which pink roses

were beautifully painted. In the centre of the table stood a valuable vase in which large pink roses were arranged. The numerous wax candles were covered with pink shades, and among the ferns and plants which adorned the room hung little pink electric lights; and everything that could be was ornemented with pink satin ribbon and bunches of roses.

It may here be said that owing to Helen's illness Lord Beaufort had not had late dinner so the sight was quite new to Gladys.

Three footmen with powdered hair and chocolate and drab livery were in attendance.

"Oh Mulberry what is this?" asked Gladys, pointing to one of the menus.

"Oh that is the menu of my table d'hote" replied Mulberry carelessly, "this is of nightly recurrence."

"How delightful!" cried Gladys and sitting down she carefully studied her menu:

MENU DU DINER.

Wednesday, October 20th

Hors d'œvres.
Consommé Parsanne.
Crême d'asperges.
Sole normande.
Selle de mouton à l'anglaise.
Jambon de York à la Zingara.

Pommes maitre d'hôtel.
Poularde à la broche.
Salade de saison.
Glace marigan.
or
Gateaux Mignons.
Fromage.
Dessert.

THE SECOND ENTRÉE MAY BE EXCHANGED FOR MACARONI.

As can be imagined the dinner took a good time, but when at length it drew to a close the company proceeded to the drawing room where they settled down for some good music. Mr. Vermont was the first to contribute to the entertainment. He played "Intermezzo" as a solo violin, and the beautiful melody only added to both Mulberry's and Gladys's happiness. Many others also played and sang, and at last by dint of great persuasion Gladys consented to sing. She had a magnificent clear soprano voice and as he listened Mulberry Beaufort fairly trembled for joy.

In the midst of the proceedings the dowegar Lady Beaufort entered (Mulberry's mother). She looked a great deal older than she was but she was still very handsome.

Her hair was silvery white, but her eyes and complexion were very dark, and she very

much resembled her son. She was attired entirely in black silk and white lace.

The reader may think it strange that Lady Beaufort did not make her appearance at the table d'hote but to tell the truth she considered herself rather too old for such things, her age being 75. She generally partook of a plate of fricassed ham and a glass of sherry, by her own fireside, but the last two nights she had partaken of her meal with Helen.

During her repast she usually read Household Hints and then on coming into the drawing room she had plenty to talk about. She had given her son a great deal of hints as to how he should propose and now hearing that he was accepted she made her way to where Gladys was sitting and proceeded to give her some advice as to her future housekeeping. It rather bored Gladys but being so far very high in Lady Beauforts estimation, she tried her best to look interested.

At about 10-30, Lady Beaufort got up and played God save the queen on the piano and several of guests joined in the chorus on their violins and harps, soon after which, the people began to depart.

"Shall you have guests tomorrow night Mul-

berry?" enquired Gladys as soon as the last visitor had strayed from the drawing room.

"No dear I dont think so, they tire me if I have them every night" replied Mulberry.

"But you'll have the dinner I suppose?" eagerly asked Gladys.

"Of course" replied Mulberry with a shrug of the shoulders "as I told you Gladys it is a nightly performance here."

"How nice!" gasped Gladys "well now Mulberry dear I will go and see how Helen is; shall I say good night now?"

"If it pleases you dear" answered Mulberry.

Gladys kissed him fondly and then turned to Lady Beaufort who accompanied her upstairs.

Lawrence and Mulberry then retired to the study for another glass of burgandy before going to bed.

CHAPTER 30

THE DAWN OF LOVE

SOME few weeks had elapsed since the aforesaid dinner party took place and day by day Helen grew stronger, till at length Dr. Durham pronounced her to be well enought to get

up; in fact he went so far as to say that a drive in the fresh air would do her good. As may be imagined it was a happy day for everybody, when Helen attired in her new winter clothes made her appearance in the large hall, ready for her first drive in the open air since her illness commenced.

Gladys was also there and the nurse whom Mulberry had thought it advisable to keep a little longer.

It was a nice bright day such as is seldom seen in the month of November. The victoria stood at the door and the two beautifully groomed bay horses were pauing the ground, eager to be off. Mulberry and Lawrence saw them safely off and then as they turned into the study Mulberry said "I think if Miss Winston is well enough, it would be a good thing to drive to Cannon Street this afternoon and see about reading that story of Sheenes."

"I think so too" replied Lawrence.

Neither of the men seemed at all inclined to settle down and after wandering about a good deal, Mulberry threw himself down in a chair and gave a yawn. There was silence for a little while and at last Lawrence unexpectedly broke it by saying "I say Mulberry how long

is it since you and Gladys Lincarrol have been engaged?"

Mulberry turned a dull red and began to light his pipe. "Why do you want to know?" he stammered at last.

"I'll tell you presently" replied Lawrence with a smile.

"Well I think it is about three or four weeks" answered Mulberry shuffling about from one leg to the other.

"Is that all?" enquired Lawrence.

"Yes" replied Mulberry, "now tell me why you wanted to know.

It was now Laurence's turn to grow embarresed, "well the truth is" he said at length "I am thinking of proposing to Helen Winston, and as I have had no experience I would like a few hints as to how I should go."

Mulberry laughed "well you should go to my mother for hints" he replied "she helped me very much during my little romance."

"Well I am afraid it would hardly do for me to go up and ask Lady Beaufort to give me some hints, as I am about to propose" replied Lawrence "she would be very much taken aback I should think."

"Not she" answered Mulberry with a shrug of his shoulders" she would take it quite as a matter of course; but still if you dont care to ask her, why not scribble her a note describing your position and I'll send one of the maids up with it; why she would write you pages of advice."

"I dont want as much as all that" cried Lawrence "I want just a few gentle hints as to how to be loving and look as if I was in ernest."

"Well why not write to my mother?" again repeated Mulberry.

"It would look so silly" said Lawrence "and yet I'm hard up for advice and *you* dont seem inclined to give me any"

"No, because you'd get it much better and more original from my mother" replied Mulberry.

"Well then I'll risk writing" said Laurence getting up as he spoke "but mind if Lady Beaufort is annoyed you must take the consequences because I should never have dreamt of doing this without you."

"Oh I'll answer for the consequences" said Mulberry with an amused smile as his friend

sat down and taking a sheet of crested note paper proceeded to pen the following lines:

LADY BEAUFORT

I hope you will excuse the liberty I take in writing you these few words—but speaking honestly I am in the very same difficulty as your son was a little time ago and out of which you so cleaverly helped him. Would it be asking too much of you to do the same for me. I am about to propose to Helen Winston and dont quite know how to express myself. I want it to be quite a short proposal and one quickly got through. Do you advise me to do it out of doors or in. I am afraid I should get so nervous in a drawing room, but of course it is just as you think best. Might I have an answer to this as soon as possible please.

Believe me,
Yours faithfully
LAWRENCE E. G. LINCARROL.

"Here now if Lady Beaufort turns that to ridicule its not my fault cried Lawrence hastily screwing his epistle into a cocked hat.

"No of course not" replied Mulberry encouragingly ringing the bell as he spoke, "now

when the butler comes I'll tell him to send it up at once and mark my words Lawrence you'll have a reply within three minutes from now."

"I feel an awful ass" responded Lawrence throwing the note on the table "but now I'm going out for a bit perhaps as you say I shall find an answer waiting for me when I come back."

"No doubt of it" said Mulberry and with that Lawrence disappeared into the hall.

The day was beautifully fine as I said before so Lawrence walked further than he had at first meant to and coming back he met Helen, Gladys and Mrs. Chizzle the nurse and at Helen's request he got into the carriage and made one of the party home.

Helen looked quite her old self again. The same bright red colour was on her cheeks and the old light in her eyes.

"I think the drive has done you good Miss Winston" remarked Lawrence noting the change in her face.

"Yes, I feel so much better" answered Helen "we drove all round Hyde Park and the air is really lovely for London."

"It is" replied Lawrence and then turning

to the nurse he added "I should think you are pleased with the progress your patient is making."

"Yes" assented Mrs. Chizzle "I am."

"Do you think Miss Winston, you are well enough to drive to Cannon Street this afternoon and read Mr. Sheene's "story"? enquired Lawrence.

"Perfectly" replied Helen with a smile.

Lawrence was astounded, "you must be prepared for bad news" he said.

"I am already prepared" said Helen.

"For the very worst?" queried Lawrence.

"For anything" returned Helen

"That's alright then" replied Lawrence.

"Mulberry and I are going to tea with the Vermonts this afternoon, but we need not start till 4 o'clock" said Gladys.

"It would'nt matter if you were a little late" answered Lawrence.

Just then the victoria stopped and after having helped the ladies to alight, Lawrence went quickly to the study where as Lord Beaufort had predicted an envelope lay waiting to be opened addressed to Lawrence in the dowegor lady Beaufort's hand writing.

Lawrence blushed as he took up the bulky

package and retired with it to the privacy of his own bedroom, where we will leave him to read it in silence.

A copy of the letter is given below:

Nov. 4th 18—

DEAR MR. LINCARROL

It is with great pleasure that I comply with your wishes. It is not the first time I have been appealed to under such circumstances. There is an art in proposing as well as in every thing. If you are liable to nervousness, do not propose indoors. There is a very nice little nook in the back garden by the crocus bed, where my own romance took place. It is quite unfrequented from 11 to 1 and from 3 to 6.

Be careful not to be too sudden or you will make the girl shy, but do it by degrees. Keep as close to her as you can after she has accepted (which if you manage it with tact she is sure to do) draw her to you and murmer soft words.

If you wish for more details do not hesitate to write to me. Wishing you every success.

I remain

Yours etc.

CRISTINA BEAUFORT.

Lawrence folded the above and carefully put it in his blotting pad, and then with a sigh of relief he brushed his hair and went down to lunch.

CHAPTER 31

Helen was pronounced quite well enough to drive to the office that afternoon; so accordingly the victoria was again brought to the front door and Helen, Lawrence and Mulberry all got in. It was not considered necessary for Gladys to go too.

On arriving at Cannon Street Netherby opened the door of the office, for he expected them all the morning. Mr. Spriggs (the solicitor) was there too.

Helen was soon seated at the desk and the roll of paper, containing Cyril's story was untied amidst a breathless silence.

It was very touchingly written and stated how Cyril, led away by Mr. Palsey, had contrived to find out where Mr. Winston kept his money; and how, still under Mr. Palsey's influence had gone up to Warwick to plan the murder of poor John Winston. He fully acknowledged his guilt, but declared over and

over again that he never would have done it without Mr. Palsey's aid. It ended by a heartfelt intreaty for forgiveness.

Helen's voice faltered a little in places, but she never really broke down till the last word had fallen from her lips, then she sobbed softly, while Mr. Spriggs bustled about and put away the papers.

Lawrence took Helen's hand and tried to comfort her but it seemed useless.

Meanwhile Lord Beaufort sought out Netherby and engaged him as footman. The poor man was highly delighted for he was getting no pay at present and as every one knew Mulbery Beaufort was not at all scanty in the way of wages.

Helen seemed very dull and depressed all the way home but she shed no more tears.

Soon after 5 o'clock Lawrence began to grow very restless so lighting a cigarette he strolled into the garden to enjoy the last glimpse of day-light. Some how his steps led him to the crocus bed and here he continued to walk up and down his thoughts occupied with Helen Winston.

As Lady Beaufort had said the crocus bed was a delightfully quiet spot. Not a soul

was to be seen any where, and a general air of peace pervaded the whole atmosphere. Lawrence continued to walk up and down lost in his rapturous reveries, while the evening grew darker and darker. By and by the stars began to come out and at length the moon rose full in the heavens, and then Lawrence looked up and there in front of him stood Helen, clad in her evening dress of pale yellow and a white shawl thrown round her shoulders.

She seemed as supprised as Lawrence for she stopped suddenly on seeing him.

"I beg your pardon Mr. Lincarrol" she began "I hope I am not disturbing you, but Lady Beaufort told me to come here before dinner and see if Jefferson (the gardiner) had raked the beds properly."

Lawrence grew very red and glanced quickly and mechanically up to the window of Lady Beaufort's budoir. There sure enough the old lady was looking out, but on seeing the two together she quickly retired into the regions of her own bedroom.

"This is Lady Beaufort's doing thought Lawrence as the letter he had received came

back to his mind. "Oh no you dont disturb me at all" he added aloud.

Helen smiled and began plucking at the faded leaves of the trees.

"What a lovely night it is" said Lawrence at last as the silence grew embarresing.

"Yes" replied Helen vaguely and Lawrence glancing at her saw by the moonlight that her eyes had a far away dreamy look in them.

"How delightfully sheltered this part of the garden is" continued Lawrence.

"Yes very answered Helen, drawing her silk shawl over her shoulders as a slight breeze blew across the garden.

"Had you a good garden where you lived before?" enquired Lawrence, unconsiously leading up to his proposal.

"At Cannon Street there was only a yard replied Helen, a painful blush mounting to her face, "but at Kenelham we had a sweet little garden, my poor dear father took the greatest interest in his flowers and so did I" she added with a slight catch in her harmonious voice.

"Dont you now?" asked Lawrence.

"Oh yes" said Helen, "but you see, it is all so different now; in those days my father and

I were constant companions and our opinions were one. But now there is nobody—nobody" and tears began to well up in her eyes and fall over her long black lashes.

"Surely somebody cares for you Miss Winston, surely there is someone to sympathise with you" interupted Lawrence.

"Oh Mr. Lincarrol you dont understand" cried Helen with a sob.

"I think I do" replied Lawrence gently, coming a little closer and taking her trembling hand. I think I understand your feelings, it must be very sad to be so—so lonely."

"Wait till your turn comes Mr. Lincarrol and you will know then" replied Helen.

"Would it be different, to have some one to care for you, to love you as your father did?" asked Lawrence.

"Oh it would, it would" cried Helen rapturesly clasping her hands together.

"suppose some one loved you now as much if not more than your father, what would you say?" asked Lawrence.

"I could not belive it" replied Helen promptly unless "unless" she added, "I knew the person very well and was quite posative of the love, and had good proofs of it."

"Have you not proofs enough?" asked Lawrence.

"Of what?" asked Helen.

"Of my love for you" replied Lawrence.

"Your love!?" gasped Helen.

"Yes" repeated Lawrence passionately, "oh Helen I can no longer restrain my feelings, I love you as I never before loved anyone, can I hope, can I dare to hope that you return my love?"

Helen did not answer. She was thinking of another proposal some months past, so very unlike this one, far away on the Kenelham hill tops, and she remembered how she had acted then. Once more, she felt the soft sea breeze fan her face, she saw the hills and the distant sea and she saw oh how plainly Cyrils form by her side, she heard his words and her own replies, she saw his blue eyes looking so intently at her; and then awaking to the present she saw another pair of blue eyes looking at her, speaking so much more fervently than the others and she felt the clasp of a strong hand on her own and then raising her head she looked at Lawrence and softly whispered "yes."

"Oh Helen" cried Lawrence "you make me so happy, so very happy!

Tears of joy dimmed Helen's eyes and Lawrence taking her hand drew her head on to his breast and told her gently of his great love for her and how happy they both would be. And Helen listenned feeling the happiness had already begun.

A gentle breeze began to stir the trees and fan the brows of the lovers as they slowly walked along the paths of love, and the moon looking down from her home in the heavens, smiled on the pair and wished them joy.

CHAPTER 32

PREPARATIONS

As the time drew on Lord Beaufort began to make preparations for his marriage with Gladys.

He had at first thought it would be nice if Lawrence and Helen could be married on the same day, but that was found to be quite impossible as Lawrence wished to visit his home first, he had also plenty of other things to attend to before he could be married.

One evening about 10 o'clock, Gladys was seated in her bedroom enjoying a few minutes quiet before going to bed.

Her maid had already done her hair and she had changed her evening dress for a warm and comfortable dressing gown. Her room presented rather an untidy appearance as the dress maker had been there that day to bring her wedding dress which now lies in a snowy pile at the foot of the bed.

As Gladys sat still by the fire a knock sounded at the door. Before she could reply the door opened and Helen came in.

"Well Gladys, you seem to be enjoying yourself here all alone" she cried drawing her chair to the fire beside her friend.

"I was only thinking" replied Gladys with a laugh.

"Of tomorrow I suppose" put in Helen.

"Well to tell the truth I was" answered Gladys with a faint sigh.

"Well you shouldnt sigh" said Helen "only think Gladys, this time tomorrow you will be Lady Beaufort."

"I know that" said Gladys rather crossly.

"How sad you seem" said Helen in supprise.

"Do I?" enquired Gladys "well perhaps

you'll feel the same the night before your marriage."

"I hope not" answered Helen promptly "oh Gladys" she added quickly "you never told me where you are going for your honeymoon."

"How silly of me" replied Gladys cheering up "well we are going on the continent, Mulberry wishes to visit some relations of his in Venice and then I shall get him to spend a week or so in Naples, Rome, Paris and other places"

"How lovely!" cried Helen "I do envy you."

"Well wont you do the same at your honeymoon?" asked Gladys.

"No" said Helen "Lawrence and I are going to spend a quiet fortnight at Ryde in the Isle of Wight."

"Oh I see" said Gladys.

"What time does the important ceremony take place tomorrow" demanded Helen.

"At 11 o'clock precisely" rejoined Gladys, who possessed the virtue of punctuality, "at St. Pauls."

"I see" said Helen "and when do you start on your honeymoon?"

"We cross the channel tomorrow night" replied Gladys.

"And Lawrence and I are going to Norfolk" replied Helen.

"Are you really?" asked Gladys.

"Yes Lawrence lives there you know" said Helen "so he thought it would be nice for me to go and see his people; why what am I telling you this for when Lawrence is your own brother?"

"I dont know I'm sure" laughed Gladys, "by the by Helen did Lawrence tell you that mother and father have quite softened, and are quite willing I should marry Mulberry, but they cant bring themselves to come up tomorrow to the marriage; Lionel and Minna are coming though, so I expect they will go back to Norfolk with you and Lawrence."

"I knew all that" replied Helen "I am really quite excited about it."

"Oh Helen you must see my wedding dress" cried Gladys, and getting up the two girls walked to the bed whereon lay a flimsy mass of tule and satin crowned with orange blossom and glittering with diamonds."

"It is really a beautiful dress" said Helen at last "how sweet you will look Gladys."

"Dont be sarcastic" said Gladys with a

smile little dreaming how pretty she looked even then in her simple dressing gown.

"Oh I say there is 12 o'clock striking" cried Helen starting up "I've been here a whole two hours, it is really disgracful, well goodnight Gladys dear" she added as she flew quickly out of the room as the last stroke of midnight died softly away.

CHAPTER 33

THE MARRIAGE

At 11 o'clock precisely, as Gladys had said the marriage ceremony began.

Gladys as I have already said was attired in a white satin trained dress made to fit her slender figure to perfection and covered with thin tule. She wore orange blossom in her hair and on her dress and a magnificent diamond crescent caught up her veil.

Helen and Mina Lincarrol were the bridesmaids they also wore white. Their dresses were exactly alike, but to colour them a little, they were delicately shaded with primrose yellow; long satin streamers hung from the bou-

quets they carried and both being dark girls the colour suited them admirably.

The page, a little Spanish cousin of Mulberry's was attired in white and yellow satin also and very pretty he looked, being just five years old and very dark with an olive complexion.

Lionel Lincarrol a tall handsome man of five or six and twenty gave his sister away as his father could not come up for the ceremony.

The mighty cathedral was filled to overflowing; the most part of the people were invited guests as Lord Beaufort was very popular in society; but a great many ordinary people had just dropped in to try and catch a glimpse of the bride and bridegroom as they marched up the church.

At last the service drew to a close, and the guests got into their carriages to drive back to Portman Square where the wedding breakfast was to take place.

One of the enormous reception rooms had been beautifully decorated with sprays of real orange blossom from Lord Beaufort's hot house and many other bridal decorations. A magnificent breakfast was then partaken of, every article being of the highest quality for

Mulberry Beaufort prided himself on never half doing things.

The guests then repaired to another room to inspect Gladys's wedding presents, which were numerous and costly.

And so the day wore on and 5 o'clock found Gladys, Mulberry, Helen, Mina, Lionel and Lawrence all at the railway station waiting for the boat train to take Gladys and Mulberry to Newhaven for whence they were to cross the channel.

Gladys's travelling dress was extremely pretty being made of pale blue grey which suited her very well.

At last the train came slowly into the station and the happy pair got in.

The goodbyes were brief and cheerful, good luck being wished on every side.

Mulberry expected to be in London again by the end of Febuary and by that time Helen and Lawrence would probably be one.

At last the whistle sounded and those left on the platform watched the train till it rushed into the tunnel, and then they turned and went on to the opposite platform to take the train for Norfolk.

It was a long journey and they were all tired when they got there.

The brougham had been sent to meet them and though the others all knew the road to their house so perfectly, Helen looked out of the window with a new interest for it was all strange to her.

After a drive of ¼ of an hour or more the carriage drew up in front of a fine old house standing rather back from the road and with a beautiful carriage sweep in front. In the moonlight it presented a very pretty picture.

Before the coachman had time to ring Lawrence had jumped out and opened the front door.

They then crossed the hall and entered the drawing room a beautifully furnished room.

Mrs. Lincarrol was reading by the fire when they all entered. She was a very tall thin woman with reddy coloured hair done very high on her head and small winky blue eyes. Her features were fairly good, but she was powdered profusely and indeed her hair looked as though it had seen a good many bottles of hair dye. She was attired in an evening dress of purple velvit trimmed with black satin and jet. Helen glanced at her as she

rose from her chair and wondered how she came to have such a good looking family. But she quickly became aware that the room contained two other occupants. Two girls were seated at the piano trying some duets. They were both tall and fair with blue eyes and pale complexions and they wore rose coloured dresses. From Gladys' discription Helen knew why they were the twins Ethel and Elsie.

Mrs. Lincarrol rose as they entered and having embraced her family turned with a queer look in her eyes to Helen.

"So this is Helen Winston?" she said holding out her hand, "my niece I think"

Helen did not quite know what to say so she merely smiled and she was then introduced to Ethel and Elsie, both of whom she liked very much, especially the former.

"Now I think you'd better go and see your father" exclaimed Mrs. Lincarrol at last "you will find him in the library with Hugh, no doubt Helen would like to make her uncle's acquaintance."

"I should" replied Helen.

So they all marched accross the hall and opening another door entered the library.

"So here you all are again" cried a cheery

voice from within and at the same moment a tall well built man came forward. He was a contrast to his wife in every way, being fairly stout, dark and brown eyed. He had a kind though stern looking face. He greeted Helen very cordially with none of the shifty glances his wife had made use of and then introduced Hugh to her. He was only 17½ with dark hair and eyes and very much resembled Lionel.

"Well I'm glad to see you all back." cried Mr. Lincarrol, "but you all look tired, I suppose the journey was long?"

"Not very" replied Minna who had hitherto kept a discreet silence, "but I'm very hungry.

"Why of course you must be, ring the bell Hugh" cried Mr. Lincarrol heartily "and I'll see you get something at once."

A very good meal was soon brought up and it was quickly disposed of.

"Well Helen I'm going to bed now" said Minna at last, "if you come now I'll show you your room."

"Oh thank you" replied Helen and with that they both walked upstairs together.

Lionel and Hugh soon followed their example and so Lawrence was left alone with his father.

"A very nice girl Helen Winston seems" cried Mr. Lincarrol, "I admire your taste Lawrence."

"I'm glad you do" answered Lawrence, "I was struck with her when I first met her."

"Yes I certainly admire your choice" replied Mr. Lincarrol, and after a few more words they both retired to bed.

CHAPTER 34

FIVE YEARS LATER

Five years have elapsed since we last saw Helen. Let us choose a favourable moment to view our heroine after the lengthy interval.

Seated in a large and wealthily furnished drawing room by a bright fire, writing at a neat little table, sits Helen, now no longer Helen Winston but Mrs. Lincarrol. The clock has just struck 4. and the shades of the December evening are fast drawing in. By the light of the fire however we can get a tolerably good view of Helen. She has altered but little during the five years of her married life. She looks a trifle older, but the change is so slight as to be scarcely perceptible. She has still the

luxurious black hair and long lashes shading her soft eyes.

She is clothed in a rich tea-gown of a delicate green. She is writing diligently and seems intent on her work but she occasionally looks up to address a word or two to a delicate looking little girl of about three years who is playing on the hearth with a little fox terrier. This is little Nellie, the only child, a pale-faced fair-haired little thing, who has attained her third year today.

At length it grows too dark to see, so closing her blotter with a snap, Helen walks to the window and holding aside the heavy velvit curtain gazes out accross the frost-bitten garden and the roofs of the houses, which are dotted about the town of B——.

"Dear me" she says "it is beginning to snow, I think dear" she adds turning to her child "it is time you went up to the nursery tea will be ready I expect."

So saying she rings a bell and Marshland appears, looking very different to when we last saw her, in her black dress and clean cap and apron. Having stuck to Helen in the hour of trial she now finds herself the much-respected nurse of little Nellie.

Nellie having departed to the upper regions, Helen once more resumes her writing, this time by the aid of a large standing lamp. By and bye a servent enters with some tea. "Is Mr. Lincarrol in yet?" enquires Helen. "No m'am I think not" replies the servent. "oh then I shant expect him till late" answers Helen and so saying she partakes of her tea alone, which done she goes to the piano and plays a few merry sonatas. At length the clock strikes seven, and Helen is about to go and dress for dinner, when the butler enters with the message that a woman from the village of Huntsdown (5 miles distant) wishes to see her at once on a very important matter.

"Who is the woman?" askes Helen in great astonishment.

"I dont know mum" replies the butler "she is very poor-looking and says she's tramped all the way from Huntsdown to see you, but she wont give no name."

"How extraordinary!" says Helen, "I know no one living in Huntsdown, in fact I have only been there once; but however I will go and see the poor soul." and rising as she speaks Helen vanishes into the hall.

An old woman of about 60 or 70 is stand-

ing in a remote corner of the hall. The butler had spoken truthfully when he said the woman was poor looking. She wears a tattered dress of some faded hue, and on the top of that a man's coat, which might once have been black but is now almost bottle-green. A thin shawl coveres her shoulders and a battered black bonnet hangs back from her head. Her iron-grey hair is streaming over her face, still damp with the falling snow.

"Did you wish to speak to me" asks Helen kindly advancing to the woman.

"I do mum" replies the poor creature, dropping a bob-curtsey as she speaks, "I've bin tramping from Huntsdown since 4 o'clock and bin nearly turned back with the snow."

"What is your name," enquires Helen.

"Mrs. Cotton, if you please mum" answers the woman, "but to get on with my story, you must know I live at "The Jolly Dutchman" in Huntsdown. My husband keeps the inn, but he dont do much bussiness; the place is so remote-like, and I'm afraid he's a bad lot," and here Mrs. Cotton shook her head regretfully "but to come to the point mum, a week or so ago, a poor man all ragged and looking terribly ill, come to the door and asked if we

could let him in to sleep the night, as he'd no were to go and no money. My husband was drunk at the time and turned the poor man away in spite of my pleading for him. A few minutes later when my husband was in the bar I opened the door and seeing the poor man there I could not resist letting him in. So according I gave him the attic at the top of the 'ouse, where he has bin laying ill ever since without my 'usband knowing."

"What a sad story" says Helen gently "but I'm sure it was very good of you to risk taking the man in. I suppose you came to me for money did you not?"

"No mum not for that" replies Mrs. Cotton sadly "you see I've tried to save a little money myself during the last few years so I've been able to have the doctor in once or twice to 'ook at the poor man. Mr. Harland his name is. Me and my girl Sally, we've made the attic as confortable as we can and I've lit a fire up there once, but you see mum coles costs money like everythink else. The doctor says there's not much 'ope for the poor man, he's dying fast of fever and consumption. The other night mum, your gardiner, happened to come in for a glass of something and of course he

got talking with the other men and the conversation fell on you mum, and he said he's known you a long time ever since you was Miss Winston (or some sich name as that) At the time the talk was going on, I was sitting upstairs with Mr. Harland and as the door was open we could hear the talk in the bar quite distinct; well mum, directly Mr. Harland heard your name mentioned, he got quite wild and excited all of a sudden and went raving on about you and he would'nt be satisfied till I told him all I knew about you. I *was* astonished mum I can tell you. After that Mr. Harland seemed much quieter and all yesterday and today he's been in a sort of stupor, but about half past three today he called me and told me he'd not got very long to live and would I do him a favour? I said "Yes," so he told me to go into the town and ask you to come and see him at once. He says he knew you quite well some time back and you knew him too, but you probably have forgotten the name now. I tell you mum I was fair took aback, but however leaving my girl Sally in charge of him, I started off on my errand, and here I am mum, waiting to know

what your answer may be to this extraordinary request?"

"It is a most extraordinary request" as you say Mrs. Cotton, and I never knew anybody by the name of Harland" replied Helen.

"My idea is mum" says Mrs. Cotton "that the poor man is dilerious."

"Very likely" answered Helen, "but to please him, I will order the carriage and we will drive over together, you look far too tired and cold to walk."

As Helen speaks she toches a spring bell, and then reaching a sable-lined cloak from the peg she puts it on drawing the hood over her soft brown hair.

She then orders a baskitt of streangthing things to be packed for the invalid.

Then the carriage comes round to the front door and the two get in. A contrast indeed! The one small, shrivelled and shrunken, hugging her wreatched garments around her to keep out the biting cold; the other tall and stately, her rich cloak falling gracefully round her slender figure.

The drive is long and dreary; being for the most a long straight road with tall hedges at either side and an occasional cottage or tree

releiving the monotony of the scenery. But Helen, leaning back in her comfortable carriage is not thinking of the passing scenery, but of the extraordinary mission she is bent on.

At length the carriage stops, and Mrs. Cotton leads the way up to a small tumble down dirty looking inn, whith an almost illegable incription painted in white letters, "The jolly Dutchman, Thomas Cotton."

Mrs. Cotton opens the door and Helen finds herself in a very small and filthy dirty passage. A strong smell of beer and tobacco greet her on entering. A door on one side of the passage is half open, and looking through, Helen can see three or four rough looking men seated round a table with mugs of beer before them and pipes in their mouths, and the sounds that issue from the room are none of the pleasantest, for the men are talking, laughing and shouting, not to say swearing.

In disgust Helen turns to the door of the other room. It is a kitchen evidently and a remarkably dirty one too. A candle is burning in this room, and by the light of it Helen can see a slovenly looking girl stirring some horrid smelling stuff in a saucpan, while a

very small baby is yelling its heart out in a wooden cradle.

"Here Sally" cries Mrs. Cotton to the girl "how is the invalid"

"No better" replies Sally wiping her hands on her apron "I lit a fire for him, 'cause he grumbled so about the cold."

"I dont wonder at it" responds Mrs. Cotton, "well mum," she continues turning to Helen "perhaps you'll step upstairs, its that door there mum with the handle off," and she points with her grimy finger to a door at the top of the stairs. Helen climbs the ricketty staircase with a wild fear and misgiving at her heart, wondering what the result of this strange visit will be. A light is burning in the room she enters. It is a damp cold place, a trifle larger than the passage below. A miserable fire is doing its best to burn in the grate and judging by the amount of matches strewn about, Sally must have been exerting many patient efforts to get it to burn at all.

The window was minus a pane of glass and the cold wind blew right through the room making the door bang to and fro with a madly monotonous tone.

Helen glanced hastily round the room, but

the corners being in darkness, she had to hold the candle above her head to see anything at all. In doing so a groan caught her ear and advancing to the corner from whence it issued, Helen perceved a sort of pallet bed streached on the floor, covered with a singal blankett. Placing the candle on the floor close by, Helen knelt down and with trembling hands and a quaking heart pulled the covering away. And then—no wonder Helen uttered that low stifled cry; for there with his pale thin face turned towards her and his skeleton hands clutching at the blankett, there with his eyes dim and sunken and his breath coming quick and short lay Cyril Sheene alias Mr. Harland. For a moment Helen could not utter a sound, the words seemed to stick in her throat, and she knelt gazing in horror and amazement at the fast-dying man. It was Cyril who broke the awful silence, "Helen" he whispered brokenly "what a long time you were coming."

"I never dreamt it was you Cyril" answered Helen taking his thin hand in hers, for now all her heart seemed to warm towards the man who had wronged her so much and who was so soon going to leave her.

"No of course not" replied the dying man

"you never thought I would come to this—(here he stopped for breath), "but I want to tell you this before I die."

"Cyril you must not die" cried Helen, opening her basket and producing some wine.

"No, no" gasped Cyril pushing the glass away "its no use, I know I'm dying, the doctor said so; give me some water to ease my throat and I'll go on."

Helen gave him his wish and then knelt down beside him while he continued.

"After I left you Helen, that day you went to Richmond, I intended going to Picadilly to pawn some things as I had no money to pay my debts. When I got back to my amazement a letter from Mr. Palsey was waiting for me, which explained that the police were already on our track and that if I valued my life I had better leave London and go to some place with him. Of course I had no choice but to go, but oh Helen if you could have known my feelings when I thought I should not see you again. Hastily I scrawled a note to you and added a few lines to my will, you read them did'nt you?"

Helen nodded in assent.

"Well" continued Cyril, "having made my

preperations, I started off to meet Palsey. We traveled together. I forget where we were going. Palsey told me how he had escaped after he had been locked up in the drawing room. We had to change at Charing Cross I think and scarcely had we set foot on the platform, when up came two policemen and before we could say a word we found ourselves handcuffed. Well to make a long story short we were tried and I was sentenced to 10 years penal servitude, and Palsey who had done the most part of the crime had penal servitude for life. Well after three years of my time had passed, I was granted a free pardon for saving the life of someone. I have no time to tell the whole story now. At first I was delighted at the mere thought of being free again, but then I recollected I had no friends nobody to care wether I lived or died. When I was set free I wandered about trying in vain to find you Helen. But I got no news of you, untill one day I read of your marriage in the paper. Then I gave up all hope of ever seeing you again. Soon after I fell ill and spent many weeks in an old barn, attended only by a child who used to go messages for me etc: till I was well enough to walk about again. Then my

wanderings began again, and I found them harder than ever. After my severe illness I could no longer bear sleeping out. I had to buy lodgings wherever I happened to be, and once or twice when I had no money I had to sleep out in the fields. That did for me Helen. From that day I grew much worse. A young man took pity on me one night and gave me a room in his house for nothing. But with his exception no one cared and so I wandered on untill late one night I arrived at this miserable inn. I did'nt know where I was, but I thought it safe to take another name. So I was brought up here, where I should certainly have died had not some one down in the bar mentioned your name, and then the excitement of seeing you kept me up——

Here Cyril stopped gasping for breath and Helen with her tears fast falling administered water to him and propped up his pillows.

"Helen" cried Cyril at last, he could barely talk now, "do you forgive me?"

"Oh Cyril" cried Helen "of course I do; oh if only you had come to me before, how happily this might have ended. I forgive you fully from the bottom of my heart."

Cyril smiled, he was too far gone to talk

and Helen could see his eyes growing brighter.

A long silence followed while Cyril's breathing grew laboured and slow. Presently with a great effort he turned and caught Helen's hand in his own. "Helen I'm going fast. Goodbye I die happy since you forgive me." And Helen stooped and kissed him. He turned and looked at her for the last time and then his spirit passed quietly and peacefully away.

CHAPTER 35

CONCLUSION

A YEAR has passed since the sad events recorded in our last chapter, and Cyril has long been laid in the church yards sod. His grave is ever bright with flowers placed there by Helen's loving hands and by those of her children Nellie and John.

Of Mr. Palsey little has been heard but it has lately been rumoured that he died a natural death in prison, though some people exagerate and say he died by his own hand.

Marshland is still living though her health is gradually becoming weaker.

And what of Helen herself?

Let us look into her drawing room to-night and we shall see her once again.

It is New Year's Eve and the drawing room, hall, rather spacious rooms are all it up, while the many happy people are dancing and enjoying themselves. For Helen is giving a dance. Yes, a gathering of all her oldest and dearest friends. Among the many faces we recognise the Lincarrols. Even *Mrs.* Lincarrol is there gorgeously got up in bright yellow silk which she is proudly telling everybody was the foundation of her grandmother's wedding dress.

Minna and her husband (for she is now married) are both there, also Ethel who is engaged and Elsie who has just returned from her honeymoon. Lionel is the only one not there, but he is doing well in America.

Hugh (now in the Army) is also attending the dance. But Gladys where is she? She is also there with her husband Lord Beaufort and while the latter is talking to Lawrence let us notice Gladys who is deep in conversation with Helen.

Seated on a sofa close to the entrance of the green-house, idly watching the dancers as they waltz round the spacious room, we once more

see Helen and Gladys in close companionship. What a pretty contrast they make!

Helen with her dark hair as abundant as ever and the lovely colour on her cheeks.

She is glancing down and her long lashes cover her eyes. She looks very happy and a smile is playing about her lips.

She wears a pale violet coloured dress made in the latest fashion and the colour suits her to perfection. Gladys is attired in white silk trimmed with bright gauzy ruffles of pale pink and silver. She is playing with her fan and laughing merrily with Helen. Her bright blue eyes are full of happiness and a little colour has come into her usually pale cheeks.

"Ah well Helen dear" she is saying "you have nothing to grumble at now I'm sure."

"I never said I had" laughs Helen, "I am perfectly happy with Lawrence and my children and it *is* so nice to have you here again, but all the same I have had troubles; a good many more than most people of my age."

"Yes that's undeniable" replies Gladys "but still you have a dear husband and lovely children."

"Of course I have" cries Helen "and I am quite happy now."

"And as far as I can see there is no reason why you should ever be unhappy again," replies Gladys.

"No" says Helen, "but still I cant quite forget the sadness of my early years."

"Nonsense my dear," cries Gladys, "dont forget what you told me so long ago about your sorrows, they will become like wounds which though healed over are still to be seen, and so though you will not exactly forget the sorrow you will no longer feel the pain."

"Yes" answers Helen laughingly, "that was a very good idea on my part; and though applicable to you then, it certainly applies to me now.

So now our story comes to an end and we will bid goodbye to Helen. She has already partaken freely of the cup of sorrow but now her time has come and she knows what true happiness is and all her sorrows, miseries and heartaches shall be blotted out in that sea of mist and shaddows;—The Past.

THE END

THE JEALOUS GOVERNES
or
THE GRANTED WISH

THE JEALOUS GOVERNES
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CHAPTER 1

WISHING

ONE evening late in Sep: Mr. Hose sat in his armchair reading a news paper. His wife sat in an other looking at the "Strand" Magerzine. Mr. Hose sudonly looked up at his wife; "Elizabeth" he said "one thing I have been wishing for, ever scince we were married is a baby, would not you like to have one lookir g at her seariously "Yes indeed I should" ansed his delicat wife with a sigh.

I soud like to adobt one continued Charlie, I would like to have one of my own said Elizabeth I dont like adopting babys, well you cant do it any other way if you dont get one. Besides if it was a boy what name have you got

for it if it was a boy it should be named Charlie after you dear, and if it was a girl I suppose you would call it Elizabeth and liza for short would not you said Charlie, well yes she said beginning to read her magazine. Mr Hose now took out his watch and to his wife he said I have got to go out this eveing at what time said Elizabeth at seven oclock I promised Mr. Lineap I would meat him at his offiace at a quarter past it is now half past 6 just half an hour. I have time to finsh this bit of newes in the paper, so saying he continued to read.

Presently the clock sturck a quater past 7, oh goodnes I must fly, said Charlie Mr. Leanep will be expecting me he took up his boller banged it on his head took up a walking stick the first that came in to his hand, and rushed out of the room looking like a roughyeun out of the streets, his boots untide his hair rough he banged the door behind him.

Noisie man mutterd his wife as soon as he had disapear. I feel ashamed realy I do nothing will keep him quiet when he has got an appoinment never mind perhaps he cant help it she said and fell asleep in her armchair.

CHAPTER 2

THE NEW BABY

Mr. Hose came back at about 12 o'clock he had drunken a little whiskey but it made no effect on him. He woke early the next morning and woke his wife and began telling her all about his evening stroll with Mr. Leanep but he did not say anything about the whiskey he had drunk feering it would shock her. But when the clock had just struck half past six they heard a ring at the door bell and within a few minutes the maid servant came hurrying up stairs and said the Dr. had arrived with a box under his arm and he would like to see Mrs. Hose she said. "Oh well, will you show him up to this bedroom" said Mrs. Hose turning to her husband and saying "you don't mind him coming up, do you dear?" Mary went out of the room grinning, closing the door quietly behind her.

In a few minutes the Dr's. bold step was heard at the door and then a loud knock and with a "come in" from Mrs. Hose he entered the room.

"Oh I say Mrs Hose" he began taking off his hat "I have heard you have been wishing for a baby, so I have brought you one and your wish is granted."

"Oh hurrah" said Mrs. Hose "Is it a boy or a girl?"

"Well I don't know" said the Dr. *quite,* "but I'll leave you to find out and settle matters" so saying Dr. Pauline took his departure shutting the door with his foot, while he held his precious top hat in his two hands.

As soon as the Dr. left the room, Mr. Hose began hurrahing and laughing at the idea of the new baby coming. "I am very glad it's come, arn't you?" he said to his wife.

"Yes, I'm very glad. Hasn't it come early?"

"Yes," said her husband, "but don't you think we had better open the box and look at it?" "Well perhaps we had," said his wife, cutting the string with a pair of scissors which were lying on the bed. Directly the box was opened, a dear little fat baby rolled out on to the eider down. "Oh, isn't it a darling?" said Mrs. Hose, sitting up in bed, and placing it between her and her husband, "What a pity it hasn't got its eyes open."

"Oh, but it's asleep," said Mr. Hose; "they

never have their eyes open when they are asleep, except when they are very ill."

"Oh, yes, I see now it is asleep, it is blinking its eyelids."

"Hadn't we better be wrapping it up in something, it must be rather cold, poor little thing," he said, patting its face.

"Oh, yes, of course we must," said his wife, jumping out of bed, never stopping to put on her dressing slippers, she walked over to the wardrobe.

She unlocked it with a small key she kept in her drawer, and on the third shelf she found a small, pale blue shawl, which she had had when she was a baby, and she had kept it ever since, in case she should have a baby when she was grown up.

"Here's the very thing," she said, "the shawl I had when I was a baby," she said, skipping back to bed.

"Oh yes, that's a nice shawl," said Mr. Hose, "and it's pretty big too, we can wrap it all round it; and you can cuddle it close to you, and then it would be warm, I should say."

Mr. Hose did not get up till half past eight oclock he could not stay in bed any later because he was already rather late getting up

I expect I shall be late at my offace said Mr. Hose to himself buttning up the last button of his waistcoat, he then slipped on his coat put on his hat took up his walking stick and maid his apperance in the hall takeing a glance at him self in the glass as he passed it, he then opened the hall door and began walking at a quick pace to his offaice he was not so late after all.

CHAPTER 3

THE BAPTISAM

It was a lovely day on the 28th of september when a carriage drove up to the door and Mr. and Mrs. Hose with the baby in her arms ran down the door steps and into the carriage Mr. Hose doing the same. "It's a good thing its a nice day isn't it Charlie?" she said to her husband "Yes it is a good job or the baby couldn't have come out tho'. He isn't so very delicate, by the bye what's his name going to be?"

"Charles Edward" she said "Charles after you and Edward after his grandfather." "I hope Miss Gurling is at the church now, she's always late for everything."

"She is going to be the godmother isn't she?" asked Charlie "Yes" said his wife "You don't object do you? And his godfather is that pious man who kneels before us in church, Mr. Johns."

"Oh he is a nice man that" said the father clapping his hands "I am glad he is going to be the godfather"

"Why here we are" said his wife jumping out of the carriage.

"Oh yes" said he stepping out with a laudable air.

"Oh dear" said his wife "I've left the baby in the carriage" "Oh poor thing" said the husband running back for it. Goodbye Thompson "said he to the coachman here's 6d for you, it's quite enough for him" he murmured to his wife as he took off his hat very reverently at the church door. When they got into the church the first person they saw was Miss Gerling sitting quitertly in the bottem seat saying her prays very dovoutly. Mrs. Hose went up to her oh I say she began you are the godmother "Yes said Miss Gerling it is going to begin soon. what? said Mrs. Hose the christening said Miss Gerling Mr. Johns is not here we are wateing for him.

Presently Father clocks came bussling down the church he went up to Mr. Hose and said "I can't think why Mr. Johns is not here he is very late, yes he is said Mr. Hose and the worst of it is we cant begin without him. No we cant said the preast it is a great nuisance he continued shacking his black head of hair. after about half an hour the church door opened and in came Mr. Jons he walked quite calmly up the aisle of the curch to his own seat, takeing it more as if he was very early insted of very late, he said a few prays and then he went down to the bottem of the church and said in rather a loud wisper had not we better begin yes said father clocks puting on his stoll.

All this while during the christening Mr. Johns kept standing on one leg and blowing his nose rather hard, he didn't have to say much tho he looked rather embarassed. When it was all over they took their departure and went home in the carraige, but poor Mr. Hose parted with a good deal of his pence, because little boys kept running after his carraige and would not go away without a copper or so.

"As we are passing the confectioners" said Mr. Hose to his wife, "we might tell them to

send up a nice sugar cake in honour of baby's Xning.

"Oh yes we might do that" said his wife, scratching her head to show off her net which was carefully covering her knob behind.

They arrived home at last and had the beautiful Xning cake between them for tea.

CHAPTER 4

ENGAGING THE NURSERY GOVERNESS

"Do you know my dear" said Mr. Hose to his wife one morning at breakfast "what I was thinking of doing?" "No" said his wife looking very surprised, "What is it."

"Well" he said "I was thinking of getting a nursery governess."

"A nursery Governess" said his wife "Why the baby isn't old enough to have one yet, remember it's only 6 months old."

"Well" said Mr. Hose "I was thinking of getting one because only think to yourself how very useful she would be, she could help us in the evening when baby was in bed and besides that she could look after baby and he would get used to her before it was time to be taught."

"Oh yes" said his wife "now I see what you mean it would be a very good thing. You and I must go and see Madam Toinette about one in London tomorrow."

When breakfast was over, they went into the drawing room and Mrs. H. began knitting a pr. of socks for her short coated boy, and her husband curled himself up in an arm chair and smoked to a low degree.

"I say Lizzie eh! why shouldn't we go to London today eh?" (he was rather a cockney man.)

"Yes we can go today, I don't see what harm it could do. We'll go in the afternoon then."

"Right you are," said the husband, "I'll change my clothes" he said as he retired to his bedroom and his wife continued to knit the pair of socks she was knitting for her baby.

Presently just after the dinner-bell had rung, down came Mr. Hose from his bedroom looking like a duke instead of a mere Mr.

"I say wife do you think I look nice. I have been such a long time dressing do you know what I've put on clean?"

"No said his wife who did not take the least

interest in a man's toilet. Well he said clearing his throat and pulling up his trousers and sitting down. "I've put on this beautiful black suit with coat tails and a lovely clean shirt he said stroking his front and I've put on a clean pair of scarlet socks with a hole in but it does not show and he continued I've got on a nice pair of black trousers but he said with a sorrowful face the button has come off from my trousers which makes one leg shorter than the other. This being the only sentence his wife had heard she looked up from her plate and said "Oh you poor dear! never mind I'll sew it on for you after dinner. "Oh thank you so much! said Mr. Hose I should not have been able to go to London if you had not thought of this kind offer. Now Charles said his wife eat your dinner because we are going by the 3.15 train. Charles began eating his dinner quickly saying at the same time with his mouth full "Do you think baby will be all right with the housemaid.

"Oh yes he will be all right it is only for a few howers" said Mrs. Hose.

"Oh yes" said Mr. Hose beginning to eat his dinner.

Presently his wife looked up and said now

Charles, I have done my dinner and I am going up to get ready and she went out of the room.

Mr. Hose finnished his dinner and then put on his top hat and took his best cherry wood walking stick. He could not see his wife anywhere; so like a wise man he began walking down to the station when he was half way whom should he see but his wife walking sedately along; she looked very nice in a coffee coloured dress trimmed with brown velvet a bonnet to match with a pretty bird in front and strings of brown velvet as well as a large bow of the same; she had brown gloves and a pretty light coffee coloured parasol in her hands, her nice walking shoes and stockings just peeped from under her dress. Well said Charlie we are not late for the train."

"An't we" said his wife looking at her watch which she wore on her bracelet. "No" said Charlie but you do look nice.

They arrived at the station and jumped into a first class carriage.

Presently they arrived in London and walked arm in arm from the station. They walked up to Madame Antoinette's house to ask her if she knew of any governess which

they could engage. A nice fat looking servant answered the door. Is Madame Antoinette at home. Yes mam' she said looking rather ignorant will you step this way. (Mrs. Hose walked into the drawing room and sat down waiting for Madame Antoinette) Presently Madame Antoinette came down into the room. Good morning Mrs. Hose she said. Oh good morning Madame Antoinette said Mrs. Hose sit down but do you know of any governesses which we could engage? Well said Madame Antoinette frowning there is a Miss Brentnor she lives in Julian Road No 36. Oh what is she like? Oh she has fair hair at least you may say carrotty hair and one good thing about her is her eyes she has lovely big grey eyes. She has a very sallow complexion and she had a blue dress on last time I saw her.

Do you know of any other governesses continued Mr. Hose? Yes said Madame Antoinette there is a very nice young lady called Miss Smith she has dark hair and brown eyes but she is rather cow-like she has rather boisterous feet and a few freckles on the top of her nose but she is all right you know and she lives in Buttonbrick House Hudson's Street and then there is another young lady

called Miss Junick. She left her last place and was hated in this family and I have been told that she was known to take a few things that did not belong to her in that house; but I can scarcely believe that for she is a beautiful young lady and I like her very much. They left Madame Antoinette's house and went to call on Miss Brentnor and Miss Smith but did not like either of them. They went home and the next morning a letter came addressed to Mrs. Hose she opened it and this is what she read

MADAM,

I beg to present you with the photograph which you ask me to send. I think I have very good features and I *know* I'll make a excellent governess. It is not at all true what was said about me in my last situation and I am willing to come and look after your little boy and teach him when he is old enough. Give me a nice bed-room Madam; of course I am a Catholic which I suppose you heard from Madame Antoinette.

I remain, Yours truly,

ROSE M. JUNICK.

Mrs. Hose answered the letter and this is what she put,

DEAR MISS JUNICK,

I like you very much but I must not believe what was said about you in your last situation. Will you meet me at the Victoria Station on Thursday at half past four and I will ask you a few questions.

Yours truly,

E. HOSE.

Mrs. Hose was now satisfied she d answered the letter and in time she would have the governess with her.

CHAPTER 5

THE GOVERNES ARRIVES

THE next morning Mrs. Hose ordered breakfast early than usual in order that she might get off by the 9/30 becaus she was going to do a little shoping first and she thought to her self she could get a beautiful dinner at one of the Resteraunts and she smacked her lips as she sat down to her breakfast of eggs and beacon and a cup of cocoa. When she had

finished she went up stairs and placed her bonnet on her head and buttoned up her patent leather boots and took an umbrella because it looked stormy and started on her way to the station bidding her husband farewell.

Directly she got outside it began to rain so she put up umbrela and within ten minets she got to the station and jumped into a first class carriage (for she licked to look grand) and soon the train started off for the smokey and dreary city.

At last the train got to Victora and out jumped Mrs. hose without a moments delay, she walked up and down outside the refreshment room (for this was where she was to meet our Heroine) she went up to one lady and said do you mind me asking you but I am looking for my future governess Miss Junick do you posess that name I am sorry for your sake that I do not she ansewerd politely and walked on. then Mrs. hose asked another lady who was peradeing up and down in a red and gray dress eating a halfpeny bun which she had just bought. Mrs. Hose advanced towards her and when she got close to her she saw she was very pretty so she thorght she would be as polite as she could and began have I

the plesure of meeting Miss Junick. I am not Miss Junick but I am a frend of the dear ladys (best luck) and she told me she would be here to meet you at half past four this afternoon oh thank you said Mrs. Hose I now recerlect I was thinking I had to meet her this morning farewell or a deiw as the french say she said as she left the station to go and get some dinner. Perhaps you would like to know what she had for dinner—rabbit and merangues were what she chose and she drank sherry wine. After dinner she went into the depth of London to look at some of the shops and came back in time to see the governess. As she entered Victoria station she met a precise young lady hastening to the refreshment room, she hurried after her and when she got up to her thought she looked like Miss Junick in the face, but before she could say a word the lady jumped sideways and asked her was she Mrs. Hose and with an answer of yes they walked together into the waiting room and sat down upon a horse hair cushion and they now commenced their conversation.

"How long were you in your last place?"

"Two years madam"

"Oh and was that your 1st place?"

"Oh no I was abroad before with three little french children there was only one in the other family and she was a throro English child—so was her mother."

"Oh and what do you teach" said Mrs. Hose cocking up one eyebrow.

"Music, drawing, the use of the globes, etc., etc. only you don't want me to teach your little boy yet do you?"

"No, no, no," said Mrs. Hose "not yet he is only six months old, but are you very fond of children and have you any little sisters and brothers?"

"I have one little sister of 10 and a little baby brother and I have two grown uppers, but I am very fond of children and wish I had one of my own."

"You won't whip my baby will you?" said Mrs. Hose.

"Oh dear no" she answered "I'de spoil him more likely than whip him."

"Oh well I want you to be medium with him" said Mrs. Hose.

"Quite so Madam I understand babies thoroughly; are there any more questions you

think you would like to ask me whilst I'm here?"

"I think I've asked you pretty nearly all she answered" except when could you come to me?"

"I can come on Monday Madam I was packing a few of my things in case you would have me."

"Let me see now" said Mrs. Hose pausing "how about the washing shall you pay it or will I?"

"Well I'm not very rich Madam and it would be a charity if you will pay it."

"Certainly I will and how much are you used to getting a year?"

"Either 5 or 14 pounds according to what I have to do. I don't do much for 5."

"All right I will give you 14. I hope you will do a good deal for that as I want you to bath the baby and have utter charge of him. And as you are coming on Monday, I will prepare you a nice bedroom" "Thank you very much Madam" said Miss Junick getting up smiling. "Good afternoon Madam she said hurrying out of the waiting room. Mrs. Hose came home by the 6 o'clock train and told her husband all about Miss Junick

and Mr. Hose said he thought she'd do very nicely.

Monday soon came and with it the governess in a station cab and a large box with R. M. J. in red enamel on it. "Here I am Mrs. Hose" she said stepping out of the cab "who tips the cabman you or I"? "The Butler" replied Mrs. Hose he has a few shillings in his pocket—Come on John and give the Cabman 2/6". The Butler obeyed and helped the honest cabman in with the box. Miss Junick was then shown up to her bedroom to take off her hat. Then she went into the nursery and found her pupil sitting in a high chair all alone playing with his rattle.

Just the kind of baby I shall get jelous of she thought.

CHAPTER 6

HOW MISS JUNICK'S JEALOUSY BEGAN

As she entered the room the baby looked up from his play, and stared at her rather hard, surprised at seeing a strange lady.

But Miss Junick did not take any notice of the baby's astonishment, but merely walked

straight over to it, lifted it up, and kissed it a great many times, saying as she did so,

"Oh you dear little thing! how I would long to have you for my own." She then rang the bell for dinner, as it was then one o'clock, and she knew that she had to give the baby its dinner in the nursery. Presently the housemaid came up, bearing a tray in her hand with the dinner on it. Miss Junick then gave the baby its dinner, and got up and tried to amuse it, but the baby got cross and tired, not being used to her; so that she was obliged to lay it down in its cradle for its afternoon sleep, while she herself went upstairs to unpack her box. When she had done unpacking she came down again to see if the baby had awoke.

It was just beginning to wake up as she entered the room. She was pleased to see that it was awake, and lifted it out of its cradle, kissing it and repeating the same words as before.

At last tea time came, and pretty soon after tea Miss Junick took the baby in her arms and took it down stairs to say good night to Mr. and Mrs. Hose.

She then brought it upstairs again, took it

into its mother's bedroom, and began to undress it. She found its little nightgown in a white case with C.H. in pale blue letters on it. The nightgown was very pretty, It was of white flannel, and the frills round the neck and sleeves were of pale blue, as the baby was dedicated to Our Lady of Victories.

When it was in bed, after kissing it a great many times, she turned out the gas and retired to her bedroom, saying as she did so, "I could never find a baby like that anywhere, not even if I were to search the wide wide world."

"Well! I dont know though," she said to herself as she sat down on the bed, "I might go out tonight, and ask the Doctor where Mrs. Hose got her *lovely* baby from. Oh no though, perhaps I couldn't, as I should have to tell Mrs. Hose that I was going out and what I was going out for. But I could pretend to her that I was going out to buy some Beechams Pills or a reel of cotton to mend some of my linen. Yes, of course I could do that."

And so, without a moments delay, she marched downstairs and into the drawing room.

"Oh please Mrs. Hose," she began, "I would

like to go down the town to buy a box of Beecham's Pills, may I go?, she added.

"A box of Beecham's Pills! why—are you unwell?" said Mrs. Hose.

"Oh dear no, but in case of necessity," said Miss Junick, "and perhaps when I get there I may find some other things which I want to buy in the shops."

Oh certainly, you may go," said Mrs. Hose. "but you wont be back late, will you, because of Baby."

Oh! I have put the baby to bed," said Miss Junick, cocking her head in the air, and slamming the door behind her.

CHAPTER 7

WHAT MISS JUNICK DID IN THE TOWN

Miss Junick arrived in the town at about eight o'clock! She went straight to the Doctor's house and rang loudly at the bell. In a few minutes it was answered by a boy in buttons, who asked her what she wanted, and on her replying that she wanted to see the Doctor, she was shown into a neat little drawing room draped in green and red silk. Soon

she heard the Doctor's bold step. He opened the door and in he came dressed in an evening suit. He bowed politely as he shut the door, saying—"Have I the pleasure of seeing Miss Junick the new and accomplished governess of Mrs. Hose?" "Yes—you have that pleasure," she said, getting up and bowing also.

And what is it you have come to ask me, Miss Junick? he said preparing to sit down in his arm chair.

Oh! she said, I have come to ask you where Mrs. Hose got her most lovely baby from.

"Oh, said the Doctor, I gave it to her because she wished for one," "Do you think you could manage to give me a baby like him?" said Miss Junick.

"Well, said the Doctor, the first question is, are you married?

"No, I am not married, but I will marry if you can give me a baby like that—it would be worth marrying for."

"Well! you cannot marry till someone asks you, and I cant because I have a wife of my own," said the Doctor.

"Well! can I have a baby like it even if I don't marry?" said Miss Junick.

"Oh well! I dont think so; Is that all you

have come to ask me"? he said, in an aggravating tone, beginning to open the door for her.

"Yes, that is all," said Miss Junick, "but you will try and find a baby for me, wont you?

"Yes, but you say you are not married," said the Doctor.

"Well! I must have made a mistake, and was not thinking of what I was saying, for I certainly am."

"Oh yes, I will try and find one—Good evening Miss Junick," said the Doctor.

"Good evening Doctor Brandon, said Miss Junick, and she shut the hall door behind her, and commenced to walk up the town.

Dear dear it is nine oclock oh no half past I must hurry or Mrs. Hose will be cross and say I neglect the child and I dont only she will think so because I have it for too long only an hour and a half it is not at all long. At last she came to the house and she went strait to bed but she could not sleep for thinking of the baby which she was going to have. She did not get scolded in spite of all she said.

CHAPTER 8

THE PRIVATE ARIVAL OF MISS JUNICKS BABY

Miss Junick awoke early the next morning; she was very excited thinking of her future baby, and she didn't get up until eight o'clock. She then walked downstairs to the baby's room, and got it up. When it was dressed she gave it its breakfast, but she didn't talk to it, as much as she did the other day, for she was too much excited. After breakfast, she found it's pram in the shed and took it out for it's walk.

At last she arrived home, and after giving the baby its dinner, she put it to it's afternoon sleep. When it woke up she took it out for another walk, and on her way she met the doctor's page boy coming along with a box under his arm. As she saw him approaching she left the pram without a word and ran along to meet him. When she got up to him, the boy raised his cap and said. "If you please, Miss, the doctor told me to bring you this box and he hopes the contents will do."

"Oh, thank you, thank you," said Miss Ju-

nick, as she took the parcel, and ran back to the pram with it.

She put the box in, and walked hastily home, for she wanted to open it. Soon she got to the house, and to her great horror, as she was going upstairs she met Mrs. Hose.

"Well, Miss Junick, have you been taking baby for a walk? she said, "and what is that box you have under your arm."

"It is only something I have bought, nothing to do with you," she muttered, as Mrs. Hose shut her bedroom door.

When she had undressed the baby, she set it up in it's high chair gave it it's rattle, and hurried upstairs to open her precious box.

"I hope it's nice," she said, as she cut the string; she then opened the lid of the box. Of course it was ugly, as most babies are when they are first born.

But this would not do for Miss Junick, for she called it 'an ugly little beast," and threatened to throw it away.

When the next day came she thought it was more ugly still, and that day she really did throw it away, and I will tell you where she put it."

In fact she did more than this, for she mur-

dered it first, and then threw it into one of the dirty alleys. She was now quite satisfied that she had got rid of it, but she was more angry still when she found the bill inside the box, "Miss Junick Dr. to Doctor Paulin for one baby delivered as per agreement £1." She took the £1 out of her purse and walked straight down to the Doctors and gave it without a minutes delay and begged to have a receipt at once. So it was given to her at once, and he asked her in and cross questioned her about the baby. She paused a little and then said—

"Oh its getting on very nicely thank you, good afternoon," and she shut the outer door and hurried away home.

When she got home Mrs. Hose's baby was sleeping quietly in its cradle, but it soon woke up and she gave it its tea. Pretty soon after tea it went to bed, and she went up to her room, and I must tell you that her front window looked out upon the churchyard. She was looking out of this window as she was doing her hair, and she saw that the burial of a little baby was going on, and two poor women were there. Miss Junick pierced very hard out of the window and she recognised

that it was the same little baby that she had murdered and thrown away.

"Oh! so they are burying it are they?" she said to herself, "I wouldn't take pity on such an ugly little thing if I were them.

When she had changed her dress she went downstairs to have her supper with Mr. and Mrs. Hose thinking all the while of what she had seen. When supper was over, she went upstairs and took from her trunk a "shilling shocker" and began to read it. Presently she got tired and went to bed.

CHAPTER 9

MISS JUNICK'S PLANS

MANY years had passed by since Miss Junick had come to Mr. and Mrs. Hose, and Mrs. Hose's baby was now two years old, and Mr. Hose was very much mastaken in what he had said at first about Miss Junick helping them in the evening for she did nothing but read shilling shockers and penny horribles all the eveing till it was time for bed and after that when she was in bed she used to make plans these were what she maid, as she found her

baby ugly and that she could not get one like Mrs. Hose's she planed that she would steal Mrs. Hoses most lovely baby, little did Miss Junick think that the baby she was going to steal was the greatest tressure Mrs. Hose had ever had so she realy planed to do this wicked act. She was very kind too the baby all this time and each day she grew more and more jealous of the baby and she said her plain must soon happen and I will tell you more in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 10

HOW MISS JUNICK CARYS OUT HER PLAN

2 WEAKS had past since Miss Junick had planed what she should do. One eveing she pretented too have a bad headache and went to bed before supper and had her supper in bed in order that she might think it over, yes she said I will steal the baby tomorrow and run away home too my mother and father they will be plased to know that I have stolen something and she turned on her side I will put mine and some of the babys things in a bag very early at about 5 oclock and start off

so saying she began too snore and too go too sleap. soon the morning came and she awoke and dressed hurryeld put her clothes and one dress and one cloack and bonnet of the babys in the bag and soon she and the baby were in the train for Chichester were she and her mother and father lived. The baby screamed and cried because it was tired and wanted too go to sleap but wound not because it was in the train and had never been in a train before.

Miss Junick had forgoten to bring the babys own bottel but she had a small tin of biscuits in her bag and a bottel of sour milk which she had entendid for herself but gave it too the baby because it was very hungry and had not had anything too eat since its tea the eveing before. all this time Mrs. Hose was greeving over the loss of her baby and who she thought was her dear good governess can any one have murdered them Charlie she said and buried their bodys somewere No I dont think that could have happened but we might send round to Mrs. Wight and ask her if she has seen anything of them said Charlie. Yes we will do that said Mrs. Hose, I will go and wright a note and the weping lady left the

room. She soon came back I have written to Mrs. Wight she said the boy has taken the note and I expect an asew soon and she was wright for in 3 minets the boy entered and said if you plase Mum Mrs. Wight has come too see you herself she is in the drawing room and wants you. Now very well said Mrs. Hose and she walked down stairs and into the drawing room. Oh how do you do said Mrs. Wight I got your note sit down I will explain all about this. Mrs. Hose sat down and Mrs. wight began her story. Well she said I one eveing saw Miss Junick taking an eveing stroll and I asked her too come in to my house and she said as you are a great frend I will tell you this so she said I am very jealous of Mrs. Hose's baby and some day I mean to steal him and run away with him and go to my own mother and father and I promised I would not say a word to anyone.

Mrs. Hose jumped up from her chair Oh Mrs Wight if you had only told me this before I could have saved my own darling baby from been stolen from that wicked women and I will now put the blame on you. but why said Mrs. wight I think it was very good of me to keep my promise so well.

My dear Mrs. wight said Mrs. Hose if you had told me before I could have given notice to that wicked Miss Junick and she would have left before she could have time to steal my preschus darling and Mrs. Hose left the room and rushed upstairs to tell her husband the bad newes and Mrs. wight went home.

Mrs. hose ran into her husbands bedroom Charlie, Charlie, she said what *do* you think that wicked Miss Junick whom we thought was so good has stolen our precious baby from us and that silly Mrs. wight new of this all along but never told us simply because Miss Junick asked her not too she new that Miss Junick was going to steal him and the words died off her lips as she fainted into a fitt Mr. Hose burnt a feather under her nose to make her come round and she soon revived and was able to say more to Mr. Hose.

CHAPT 11

MR. HOSE MAKES ENQUIRIES

EARLY the next morning Mr. Hose got up dressed quickly and instead of going to his office he went to the police office and made en-

quiries and this is what he said to inspecter have you seen a young lady with a little baby. I got a governes for my little boy and now she has stolen him and has gone home to her parents her Mother is a murderdress and her father is a robber I have no idear were her parents live, No Sir said inspecter gong I have not seen her I dont think could you dicribe her and the baby to me and then I could make sure weather I had seen her or not. Well said Mr. Hose the governess was an elderly person with sharpe black eyes and black hair and a salow complexion I do not no how she was dressed at the time for it was quite early in the morning when she stole my baby. No Sir replyed inspecter Gong I have seen no such person, oh thank you said Mr. Hose good morning, good morning Sir said the inspecter as he shut the door of the police office and Mr. Hose went down the steps and walked feeling very unsatisfactory.

CHAPTER 12

MANY years have passed since Mr Hose lost his child Mrs Hose had died of greef two years

befor and often in the eveing when Mr Hose sat alonne he would say to himself would I had that wretched Miss Junick by the scraff of the neck and he picked up the poker and shook it to show what he would do if he had her in his hands. one eveing as Mr Hose sat gazeing in to the emty great where there should have been a fire, he heard footsteps in the Porch Mr Hose was startled for now that Mrs Hose was dead people seldom came near the house and Mr Hose was not much to look at, he had very little hair and what he had was very seldom brushed and his red nose got bigger every day so you can emagin how few people ventured near him. when he heard the bell ring he jumped up and asked the servent who it was she said she would go and see she soon apperd and said it was a young man wanted to know if Mr Hose lived here show him in and say I do Just at that moment a man rushed in father he said dont you know me, and he flung himself into Mr Hoses arms my son my son where have you been all these long years tell me all about it. where is mother I must tell her too why my son you will never see your mother again she is dead she has dided for the loss of you ah I have

had whom I thought was my mother and it was not untill I saw in the paper that I was still bieng looked for and that my name was Charlie Hose and Mr Hose was still alive while my supposed name was Auther Junick that I was determined to ascape and so I did. well my son I cant tell you how glad I am to have you back again saying you where 1 year old when we missed you If your mother had only been here to see you safe at home and Miss Junick in Prison and always had you with her she would rejoice. and now hoping *I* have pleased I will end my story of the Jealous governess or the granted wish.

Ethel C. Taylor

DAISY ASHFORD

Her Book